

# Backstreets

The Boss Magazine  
#88 SPRING 2010

## *The Last Carnival*

The Life  
and Times of  
Danny Federici





A man with dark, curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt and light blue jeans, is playing a sunburst electric guitar. He is looking down at the guitar with a focused expression. His right arm is raised in the air. The background consists of horizontal stripes of red, white, and blue, with a large white star on the left side, resembling the American flag.

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## FEATURES

### SPRINGSTEEN: MY DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

In this exclusive English translation, Leonardo Colombati speaks with Springsteen for *Vanity Fair Italy* as the Working on a Dream tour heads to Morricone country. .... 24

### I'LL WORK FOR YOUR LOVE

Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band on the road, 2007-2009. Two tours. Three years. Nearly 200 shows. Countless signs. We tally it up and boil it down. .... 28



### DANNY BYE BYE

*Backstreets* pays tribute to founding E Street Band member "Phantom" Dan Federici, 1950 - 2008. .... 42

## COVER

### DANNY FEDERICI

Asbury Park, NJ  
Danny Clinch Photo

## OFF THE WALL

### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & DANNY FEDERICI

November 18, 2007, Boston, MA  
A.M. Saddler Photo

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# CON TENTS

**SPRING 2010**  
#88 Vol. 22, No. 4

## DEPARTMENTS

### LETTERS

To the Editors of *Backstreets*. .... 4

### ON THE BACKSTREETS

Be Where the Bands Are. By Christopher Phillips. .... 6

### IN THE NEWS

It's an Honor: NJ Hall of Fame, Kennedy Center salute Springsteen. . 8

### ON THE AIR

Bouncing off a Satellite: Bruce guest DJs on E Street Radio. .... 12

### ON DISC

How to Configure a Dream: WOAD brings rare releases .... 14

### ONLINE

Digital EPs highlight live covers and guest spots. .... 17

### ON THE BOOKS

Clarence Clemons: Still Standing. Interview and book review. .... 18

### ON COLLECTING

Eddy Wehbe's new rarities column scours eBay and beyond. .... 22

### IN MEMORIAM I

This Boardwalk Life: Madam Marie, R.I.P. By Jean Mickle .... 86

### IN MEMORIAM II

Springsteen's tribute to Tim Russert. By Louis P. Masur. .... 87

### IN MEMORIAM III

David Gahr, 1922-2008. With a remembrance by Eric Meola. .... 88

### IN INTERVIEW

The Mystery of the Miami Horns, Part II: Steve Paraczky. .... 90

### UNDERGROUND

New name, same column: Boss boot reviews by Fred Mills. .... 94

### BURNING DOWN THE ROAD

WOAD & Magic tour recordings: The Best of the Rest. .... 96

### CLASSIFIEDS

Pen pals, messages, Boss wants and wares. .... 97

# Backstreets

THE BOSS MAGAZINE  
[www.backstreets.com](http://www.backstreets.com)



Manufactured and printed in the United States of America

*Backstreets* (ISSN 0746-990X) is published quarterly by the Backstreets Publishing Empire, Inc., 1818 MLK Jr. Blvd #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 with offices at 200 N Greensboro St #D-2d, Carrboro, NC 27510. Please address all correspondence to *Backstreets*, 1818 MLK Jr. Blvd #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Website: [www.backstreets.com](http://www.backstreets.com). E-mail: [editor@backstreets.com](mailto:editor@backstreets.com) (for letters to the editor); [orders@backstreets.com](mailto:orders@backstreets.com) (for subscriptions). Subscriptions are available for \$28 a year, \$48 for two years, or \$66 for three years in the US and Canada (in US funds only); or for overseas airmail, rates are \$36 a year, \$64 for two years, or \$90 for three years (in US funds only). All contents are copyright ©2010 Backstreets Publishing Empire, Inc. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with any inquiries. Periodicals postage paid at Chapel Hill, NC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send all address changes to *Backstreets*, 1818 MLK Jr. Blvd #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Thank you. *Backstreets* is an independent publication and is not officially associated with any of the performers we write about or their record companies.



# LETTERS

## LAST DANCE

Dear Editor:

The news of Danny Federici passing away was especially sad to hear for me. I now reside in northern New Jersey, but when I was a little kid living in Brooklyn in the early to mid-1960s, my mother was a very good friend of Danny's mother. In the '60s we used to visit the Federici house in New Jersey frequently, as it was a very pleasant getaway from the city life. My mom loved going out to what seemed to me and my brothers at the time to be "the country." We periodically rented a cottage which Danny's parents owned in Gilford Park.

When Danny was only a young teenager, it was evident that he was a uniquely talented musician. When we visited them in New Jersey we quickly noticed that the Federici house's living room was filled with instruments. Danny's parents seemed

to really support the fact that Danny appeared to be a "natural" musical genius.

In 1964 my parents took my brothers and me to the World's Fair in Queens, and I remember Danny playing his accordion at the fair in a pretty good band. He also was on the radio at some point, and my mother called the station to praise his playing. (Of course she was a little biased since she really loved the Federicis, but nonetheless her praise of his musical talent was truly genuine.)

Somewhere down the road we sort of lost touch and stopped visiting their home. Danny was quickly becoming a well-known and successful musician, often on the road. I always wanted to see him in person again, perhaps at a concert or elsewhere, but it is to my dismay that this now is not possible. I've always followed and enjoyed hearing his successes with Bruce and the E Street Band. Many people, including me, will miss having him and his great talent on this earth.

Michael A. Keough  
Pompton Lakes, NJ

## I'M A ROCKER

Dear Editor:

While enjoying a cup of coffee with my wife at a local Borders, I picked up the latest issue of *Backstreets*. With great pleasure I reminded my wife which magazine I was reading when I slid it across the table so she could see the article on The Raspberries.

For years she has made fun of my being a huge fan of their tunes—she thought it very uncool. Now that she sees Bruce agrees, my coolness seems to be rising again. Thanks.

Skip Shea  
Uxbridge, MA

## OVERNIGHT SENSATION

Dear Editor:

Just wanted to send you a quick note of how much I enjoyed reading your interviews with the Seeger Sessions Band in *Backstreets* #87. Before I started the section, as much as I enjoyed the tour at the time, it had obviously been a while so I was somewhat skeptical about making it through 20 pages of

Seeger Sessions background info. But as soon as I started reading, I loved how the interviews gave an insight into life on tour and into the musicians' backgrounds and how they were connected to one another. The rest of the magazine is, of course, fantastic as always, but the interviews really surprised me.

Brigitte Tersek  
via e-mail

## I CAN REMEMBER

Dear Editor:

Lucky enough to be at the fantastic concert in Auburn Hills, MI [11/13/09], I can't believe the fuss that's been made on the internet regarding what was to us a minor funny moment—"Hello Ohio!"—in a whole evening of personal connection with Bruce. I guess the best part about the chatter is that of all the concerts he's done, I attended one that will be unforgettable even to him!

Since 1975, Springsteen has taken me from confused collegiate to confident searcher, to supposedly finding myself, to finding myself in the wrong

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place, to finally finding my home, to reconciling with 9/11, to fighting for change, to having faith in our capacity to still dream. He has scripted our generation's story. He is vibrant and contagious, a creative genius, a sensitive soul, with unmatched talent for energizing others physically and emotionally. When he takes the stage, he gives his all and we devour it. His message is timeless, and geography irrelevant. Age 60 or not, do not be fooled; Bruce always knows *exactly* where he is.

Judy (and Fred) Cohen  
Waterford, MI

## I WANNA BE WITH YOU

Dear Editor:

Kansas City: from the highest high to the lowest low. I've seen Bruce 15 times over the years, but this was the first time with GA tickets. My 15-year-old daughter was with me, and it was her first time to see the E Street Band. We got our lottery wristbands and waited to hear the starting number. We had 294 and 295—they called 293! So we were to be the second and third people in the arena, at the front of stage, a dream come true.

The Sprint Center personnel pulled us out of the pack and had us lined up in order to go into the arena. We were really flying high! After waiting in line for about 30 minutes, they came out and announced the concert was cancelled due to a death in the family. We were stunned. The hundreds of GA people outside the arena just stood there for several minutes. Very slowly, people started dispersing. A crushing disappointment. Nothing to be done, nobody to be mad at, and we certainly could not blame Bruce. Who would feel like putting on a show when someone close to you died just hours before showtime? But damn, we were so close! I wish they could have postponed but maybe the dates just did not work out.

Joe Jenkins  
via e-mail

## HIT RECORD

Dear Editor:

I remember when *Darkness on the Edge of Town* first came out, at the time it made punk sound

lame. I was in my last year of high school, and my very cool English teacher suggested I purchase an album called *Born to Run* by a guy named Bruce Springsteen. The local record store didn't have it, so I reluctantly grabbed *Darkness* (his new release, I was told). You know what? After all these years I've yet to hear anything better. This was rebel music for people who didn't want to wear safety pins through their nose. A remastered *Darkness* with a live '78 DVD is long, long overdue.

Pedros Moschis  
Adelaide, Australia

Dear Editor:

When I saw your news site yesterday [4/1/10], I breathlessly called a buddy to tell him the good news about the remastered *Darkness* CDs. I guess I should have read further down the post, because he had to call me back to break the news to me that this was an April Fools joke.

As a Backstreets.com reader for years, I should have known better. You got me—hook, line, and sinker!

Years ago I wrote an ode to Springsteen that you loved but deemed too long to print. I bet this one gets printed (whether I want you to or not.) Well played!

Eric Field  
Chicago, IL

Well, the 176-disc edition may have been an April Fool's gag, but a remastered *Darkness* box in the works is not a joke. Keep your eye on *Backstreets.com* for breaking news... we've got high hopes that this is finally the year. —C.P.

## GO ALL THE WAY


Dear Editor:

Mr. Springsteen has a lot of fans in Argentina. Every year we're praying for a Bruce concert, but we're not very lucky, as his music doesn't arrive on these shores.

Our country is very far from Europe and the States, and the cost to travel is very expensive for us, especially after the 2001 economic crisis. An average salary in our economy is about 400 dollars per month!

He was here for the Amnesty International tour, but it wasn't a full Boss concert and many of

Continued on page 98



# WILLIE NILE

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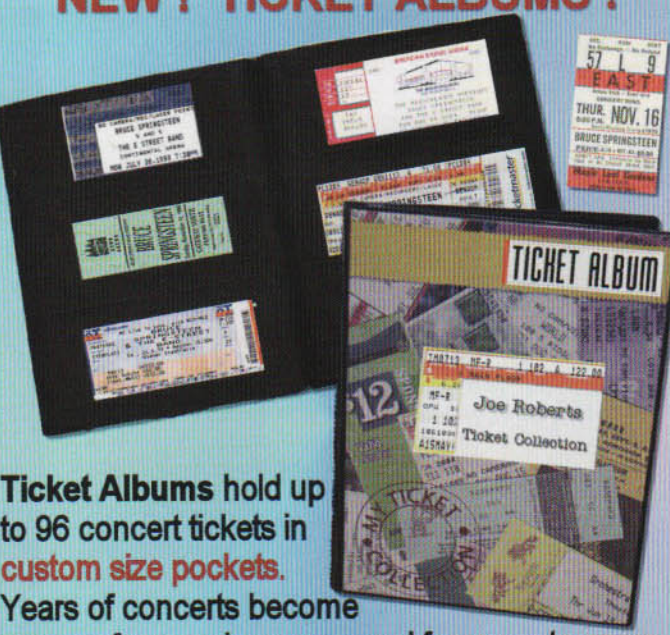
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## Master of Electricity

## Be Where the Bands Are

*We got to make an emergency announcement. I just talked to the hall manager, and he wanted me to announce that if there's anybody in the house tonight that has a weak stomach or a weak heart, could you please, during the next section of this song, step out into the lobby, as it might be dangerous to your health!*

*See, it ain't so bad when me and the Big Man do this... And it ain't so bad when me and the Big Man do this... and you could even get off with light injuries and a short trip to the emergency room when we do this.*

*Now, I bet all them guys on the radio are wondering what we're doing...*

—Bruce Springsteen,  
Winterland Ballroom,  
San Francisco, CA, 12/15/78

By Christopher Phillips

**R**emember the days when Springsteen would go years, not months, between tours? Well, times, they have-a-changed. Looking back at the oughts, there was only one year (2001) out of an entire decade when Bruce was not on the road in some fashion. And here we sit still basking in the glow of more than two years of touring, for two different albums, between 2007 and '09.

Consider this: My first Springsteen show was in 1984. I missed the Tunnel of Love tour, so my next one wasn't until 1992. By missing one tour, I had to go eight years between my first taste and my subsequent fix. Hard to imagine such a state of affairs these days (well, unless you're in Scotland. Or South Africa, or Argentina, Australia, or Japan...).

What stoked the fire sparked at my first concert in December 1984 were "fan-based recordings." Bootlegs. A whole lot of 90-minute cassettes and a whole lot of imagination had me reliving shows from nights past until I had the chance to see another one of my own. The *Darkness* broadcasts, in particular, were in high rotation—'78 tapes from the

Roxy, the Agora, Capitol Theatre, the Fox Theatre, and Winterland. Those recordings have created many a fan, and as chatter builds of a *Darkness on the Edge of Town* reissue box set (due this year, according to Jon Landau), it's a good time to remember just how integral those performances have been to the fan experience, to the Springsteen story. During that eight-year dry spell, they served to both keep me going and show me what I'd been missing.

Show me what I'd been missing? Well, not exactly. At the Winterland show in particular, Bruce reminded us radio listeners—both at the time and way after the fact—that we weren't, in fact, seeing the show. "When me and the Big Man do this," he said, and I remember wondering just what the hell he and the Big Man could be doing. At this point, I can well imagine what it was—or close enough as to make no difference. But back then, with just one night in the nosebleeds under my belt, that's when the movie projector in my head broke down. When you do what, Bruce?! And then he went on to rub it in: "I bet all them guys on the radio are wondering what we're doing..."

Of course, he must have known exactly what he was doing. Besides putting himself, the band and that night's crowd under one big tent, of those who were present and accounted for in that moment, Bruce was also pointedly demonstrating that everyone else was having a fundamentally different experience. We might have been hearing it, but we weren't *part of it*—and it's far from the same thing.

I imagine that view has informed countless Springsteen decisions over the years. Like no concert film for two decades. (As Bruce told Edna Gundersen in 2001, "TV wasn't essential to what we did.... What we did was fundamentally hot and hard to shrink down to that little box. We were sweating and wanted you to sweat.") Like no live album

for nearly 15 years, when every other major act visited that well at least once in that time. And when a live release finally came, it didn't even attempt to recreate an actual concert—because you can't recreate a concert like this. It exists for three hours, give or take, and then it's gone. And in that time, something happens—maybe something big, if Bruce and the crowd are "in concert," if it's "one of those nights"—that can't be captured on tape or on film.

In recent years, we've gotten more tour souvenirs. As Bruce Springsteen told this magazine in 2007, "At this point, if I do something, I like to document it, and I like to be able to get it to the fans." But it's just a document—there is no substitute. Many fans have wondered why Springsteen doesn't release more official live recordings, or even follow the lead of bands like Pearl Jam or the Pixies and document each night. The model is there; there's a market; there's surely money in it. My guess is that the money doesn't matter nearly as much as preserving the idea that, really, you've got to be there—you've got to be part of it to experience it. That not only is "Live vs. Memorex" no contest, it's incomparable in the first place.

I thought about that Winterland tape in November of 2009, when I was lucky enough to be part of the Madison Square Garden crowd for the one-off *Wild & Innocent* and *River* performances. It may be a cliché at this point, but I don't know any other way to say it: the air was electric. That's what it felt like—like there was a buzz, a crackle, energy literally in the air. Like the anticipation in the room became manifest, and if you had some special kind of infra-red goggles, you could see it. It was there before the lights went down, and then you could feel—and again, I mean that literally—Bruce and the band feeding off it, and giving it back. It was there all night, both nights.

On those nights I thought about Winterland. And no sooner did I think *please let someone be taping tonight* than it occurred to me that no recording would be able to capture what that venue, that crowd, that performance, made me feel. Sure enough, the tape from 11/8/09, phenomenal as it is, is just a different experience—it's like looking at a color plate of a Van Gogh. And I bet Bruce knows that. I bet he likes that. And I bet he doesn't want anybody to be fooled into thinking otherwise.

Looking back over the course of the Working on a Dream tour, I didn't feel like I was looking at a masterpiece at all in the beginning. It's rare that I don't see eye-to-eye with Springsteen when it comes to his live show—I mean, I might wish he'd change a song here or there, and sure, it's fun to dissect this stuff, but when I'm in the crowd, I'm typically having a blast, happy to let myself be putty in his hands. The second night of rehearsals for the Working on a Dream tour, however, trying to put together a show before the official opening night, Bruce thought they'd just figured it out—and I really didn't. As the tour began, the feeling continued: I couldn't believe that his answer was more old chestnuts, not fewer; fewer songs from the new album, not more; less of the background singers, not more.

But that feeling didn't last long. Soon enough, the request portion of the tour gave way to the anything-goes "Stump the Band" feature, with Bruce and the band tackling songs they'd never tried before. That started some current flowing. As Max Weinberg tells us on page 35 of this issue, "If it's not a challenge, my sense is that he's not really into it. He's gotta have a challenge—and he challenges himself. He's not up there to just give you a concert." And heading into the fall, the challenge increased as they began tackling albums in sequence—not just *Born to Run* and *Darkness*, which they'd done



before, but by the end, every E Street Band record through 1984.

As the tour began, I was gritting my teeth when we got "Lonesome Day" rather than "Life Itself"; I was a non-believer. But while *theme* may have trumped *challenge* early in the tour, with the Recession Pack speaking to a beleaguered nation better than some of the new album material presumably would, Springsteen soon found the answer to keep things fresh and vital. Not by creating magic, not exactly... but by establishing the conditions for the magic to happen.

"You're the shaman, you know?" Bruce told *60 Minutes'* Scott Pelley a few years back. "You're the magician. The idea is whatever the ticket price, we're supposed to be there to deliver something that can't be paid for. That's our job."

What's astounding to me is that this far into Springsteen's career—after turning 60, after suffering losses one after another after another, two years after hitting the road for *Magic* and hardly stopping since—Bruce is still pulling that rabbit out of the

hat. What comes as no surprise—what I feel like I learned a long time ago, what was impressed upon me by missing the Tunnel tour, what I've been reminded of again and again over the years on those nights when everything comes together—is that you've got to be there to see it.

\* \* \*

Long time, no see. And as you're holding this issue in your hands, you've gathered that reports of our death are greatly exaggerated. Not that I don't understand exactly why those rumors were there—completing this issue took as long as Bruce's slog to make *Born to Run*. But I want to assure you that *Backstreets* is back in the magazine business, we never meant to leave it, and I can't tell you how much we appreciate your patience during the hiatus.

I've rightfully taken plenty of heat on the message boards for the delay, and I've also received many encouraging e-mails from readers and subscribers offering help, support, and kind words. What I appreciate about *both* is that this is a magazine people

care about—a fact I treasure and take very seriously. What if we stopped publishing and nobody gave a magic rat's ass?

So in that spirit, I'll make you this pledge: there will never be that kind of wait again. Or even close to it. Ever. As Bruce said in 1999, we're rededicated, reanimated, resuscitated and reinvigorated. Summer issue? You bet. And fall, and beyond.

Working through a few iterations of this one, pulling it apart and putting it back together, axing some content and saving some for next time, we've found some clarity on what we want the magazine to be going forward, and how to make it work.

1) We all want *Backstreets* to come out on a more regular basis. To make that happen, we have to scale back our page count. Back when we actually published quarterly, issues stood at 36 pages. Rather than letting things spiral out to these monster-sized mags of late, we're going to focus on keeping it manageable, and keeping it coming. Yeah, this one happens to be a 100-page issue; it had to be done. And it still just covers the tip of the iceberg since last

time... but that brings us to the next point:

2) We want the magazine and website to supplement each other, rather than continuing to cover absolutely every Boss happening in these pages. The freedom to let some of our reports be online-only will allow us to take the magazine even further in the direction of exclusive articles, interviews and analysis and let the website cover more of the day-to-day. That's why you won't find show-by-show coverage in this issue (you can find it at [Backstreets.com](http://Backstreets.com)), but you will find in-depth features, interviews, and photographs that you won't see anywhere else.

Sure, there will be some cross-over with the site—the magazine has long served as an archival chronicle, and we want to preserve that. But in the age of the internets, we want to complement rather than replicate. If we get the balance right, the website and magazine will go hand-in-hand more than ever—and when *Backstreets* turns 30 this fall, we'll truly have something to celebrate. Thanks for continuing to show the faith and share the ride. 🎸

"Symynkywicz uncovers Springsteen's religious impulse and offers insights that even the most knowledgeable fan will appreciate."

—June Skinner Sawyers, editor of  
*Racing in the Street: The Bruce Springsteen Reader*

"Symynkywicz explores theological and political questions with the deftness of a Harvard-trained minister and a great Springsteen fan. . . . [At times] you'll want to stop reading, turn on the Boss and dance in the dark, maybe even praying while you do."

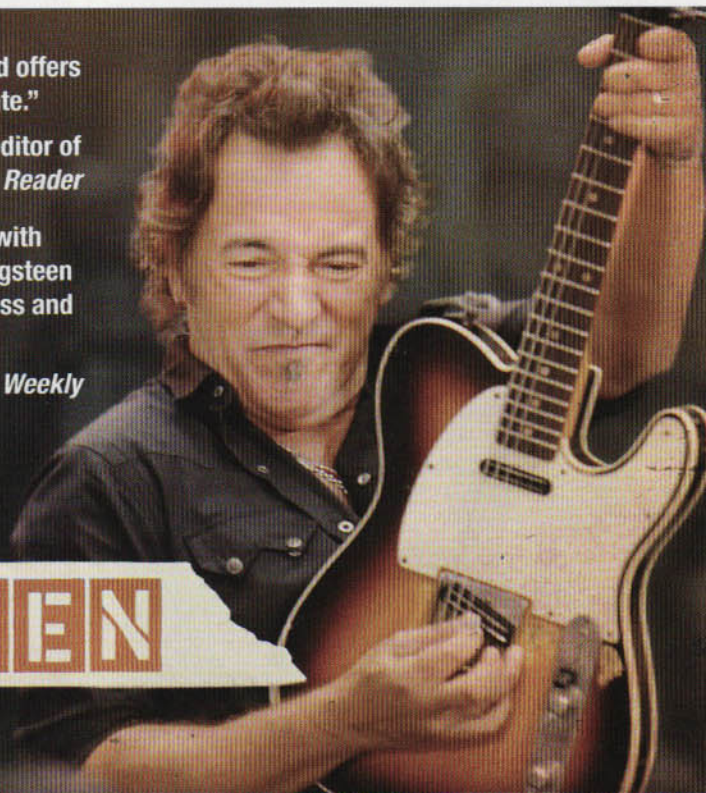
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### It's An Honor

**NEW JERSEY  
HALL OF  
FAME  
MAY 4, 2008**

By John Zur

In the spring of 2008, at the NJ Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), Bruce Springsteen was present to be inducted, along with 14 other New Jersey luminaries, into the NJ Hall of Fame. Governor Jon Corzine hosted the May 4 ceremony, the Hall of Fame's very first, and LaBamba and the Hubcaps were the house band.

Springsteen and his fellow honorees in this inaugural class were divided into five categories: Historical (Clara Barton, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein), Enterprise (Buzz Aldrin, Malcolm Forbes, Robert Wood Johnson II), Arts & Entertainment (Frank Sinatra, Springsteen, Meryl Streep), Sports (Yogi Berra, Bill Bradley, Vince Lombardi), and

General (Toni Morrison, General Norman Schwarzkopf, Harriet Tubman).

I was fortunate to have purchased two tickets online, and even though our seats were in the highest tier, it was just nice to be a part of history and feel proud—as I usually do—of my state of New Jersey. As for pride, though, it would be hard to top what Adele Springsteen was surely feeling. As Bruce said: "Albert Einstein, Bruce Springsteen... my mother's going to like that part. She's here tonight. It's her birthday, so there you go, Mom. It's the only time those two names are going to be mentioned in the same sentence...."

The ceremony began in dramatic fashion: the stage went dark and one by one, each inductee was introduced under a circular spotlight. Springsteen was the last announced and received the loudest ovation.

Springsteen was also the last honoree inducted, but he appeared earlier to induct Frank Sinatra. Aside from Bruce, most of the induction and acceptance speeches were short and perfunctory—with the exception of Yogi Berra, who received the second-loudest cheers of the night. Yogi inducted Buzz Aldrin and stated



Reverend Jim Ignatowski sure has aged well.

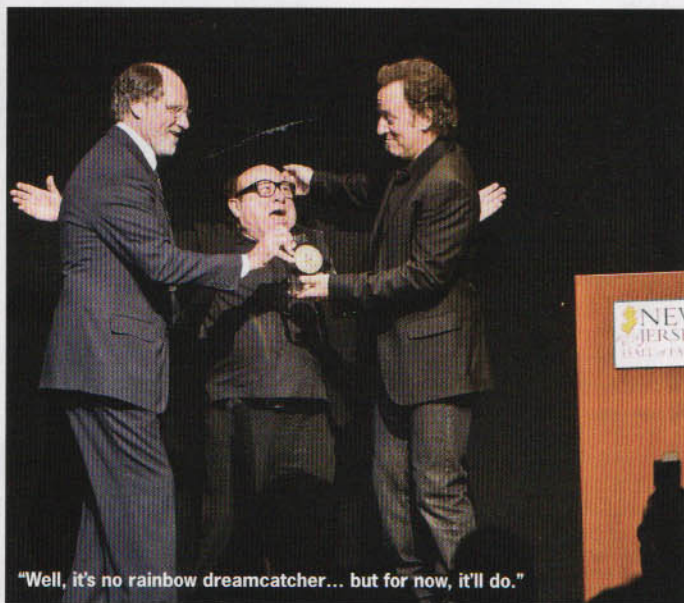
that not only was he his neighbor but also his favorite astronaut. Aldrin responded by asking Yogi how many astronauts he knew, to which Yogi replied: "Only one, but you are my favorite!"

As is par for the course, Bruce crafted a thoughtful, humorous and poignant induction speech for Sinatra, beginning with a memorable quip, "I always said that Frank owned New Jersey, but he lent me a little piece of it down the shore" [see sidebar for the full speeches].

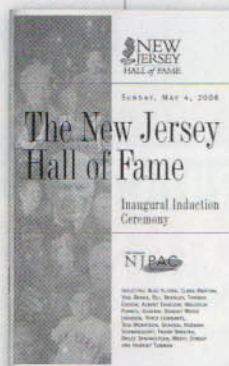
Danny DeVito—also a native New Jerseyan, and in fact, now a member of the NJ Hall of Fame's class of 2010—inducted Bruce and provided the audience with a few laughs in his animated and

enthusiastic speech. "When you think of New Jersey, you think of him; when you think of him, you think of New Jersey."

Springsteen came on stage to the strains of "Glory Days" and delivered a wonderful acceptance speech that ranged from the humorous to the poignant. After completing his remarks, Bruce joined LaBamba and the Hubcaps on guitar for an abbreviated version of the Sam and Dave classic "Thank You." The finale which followed was a rousing, funny version of "Glory Days," with DeVito taking Little Steven's role and all the inductors, the inductees, and the governor joining Springsteen and the band on stage.



"Well, it's no rainbow dreamcatcher... but for now, it'll do."







## SPRINGSTEEN INDUCTS SINATRA

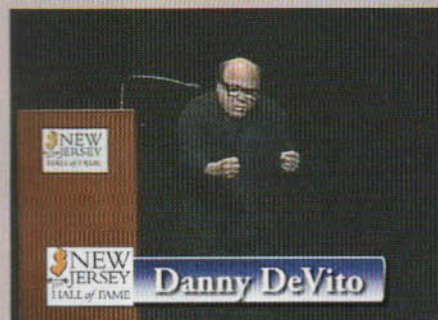
I always said that Frank Sinatra owned New Jersey, but he lent me a little piece of it down along the shore.

My wife was in a beauty salon in Los Angeles, and she met a woman who invited us to a party. We went to the party, and I was standing there and I felt a tap on my shoulder, and I turned around and there was Frank Sinatra. He had a glass of Jack Daniel's in his hand, and he lifted it up and said, "Hey, it's about time, kid!" We talked for about a half-hour about Hoboken and the Jersey Shore. It was a big thrill. A big, big thrill in my life.

There are only a few artists whose work transcends genre and ascends to a level of national poetry. Frank Sinatra stands high among them. When I hear Frank, I hear America—but more than that, I hear New Jersey. It's the voice with the chip on its shoulder. No matter how much good fortune, the perennial underdog, and the deep soul of hard times, and plenty of good times, and sexy times.

I got to know Mr. Sinatra a little bit towards the end of his life, and I was present at his funeral where, as Frank's voice filled the church, I saw Don Rickles cry. As the mourners filed out I stood on the steps of the church. Now, the area around the church was serene and secure, but immediately across the street all hell was breaking loose. It was a scene out of Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*. I felt somebody standing next to me, and I turned to see Jack Nicholson, from Neptune. He lit a cigarette, shrugged his shoulders and said, "King of New Jersey."

To accept the award for Frank Sinatra, the King of New Jersey: Nancy Sinatra and [his] granddaughter A.J. Lambert.



## DeVITO INDUCTS SPRINGSTEEN

I'm on this stage to honor *The Boss*. I mean, come on! You know what you feel like when you go to a Bruce Springsteen concert and how excited you are... how the hell do you think I feel right now?

I was born in Asbury Park. We call it Asbury; you don't have to say the "Park" part. My mother was born there. My sisters were born there. My Mom's in heaven; my sisters (in my mind, the original Jersey Girls) are down the shore. And you know that down the shore, everything is all right.

I have the privilege of honoring a true artist. He is a man who digs down and looks into his soul and puts forth words and music that speak to us, speaks to every man, woman and child in this auditorium, in New Jersey, all over the world. And we're happy that he's from New Jersey.

He holds up a mirror to our souls. His words and music allow us to look inside ourselves, allow us to understand how to better deal with life, to better deal with any kind of oppression, any kind of love. He speaks about every human emotion there is and allows us that opportunity to better navigate. And also, of course, he is the first man to step up when there is anguish or any kind of grief and lift us up and give us hope. To look into the future for what lies ahead.

I want to say: Bruce, you have sold millions of records, and you've held audiences all over the world in the palm of your hand. You have received every award—Grammys, Oscars, this that and the other. Well, listen to this. You can always get another Grammy. You can always get another Oscar. But tonight, we are giving you something that happens *once in your lifetime*.

Ladies and gentlemen, please help me celebrate and salute an individual who, when you think of New Jersey, you think of him; when you think of him, you think of New Jersey. With all my heart and soul, I am so honored to induct Bruce Springsteen into the New Jersey Hall of Fame!



## SPRINGSTEEN ACCEPTS

When I first got the letter I was to be inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame, I was a little suspicious. A New Jersey Hall of Fame? I don't know, does New York have a hall of fame? Does Connecticut have a hall of fame? I mean, maybe they don't think they need one.

But then thought, well, let me see: Albert Einstein, Bruce Springsteen... My mother's really going to like that part. She's here tonight. It's her birthday, so there you go, Mom. It's the only time those two names are going to be mentioned in the same sentence, so I'm going to enjoy it.

When I was recording my first album, the record company spent a lot of money taking a lot of pictures of me in New York City. But something didn't feel quite right. I was walking down the boardwalk one day, stopped at a souvenir stand and pulled out a postcard that said

"Greetings from Asbury Park." I remember thinking, "Yeah, that's me." Down south there was Patti Smith; right here in Newark was George Clinton and Parliament-Funkadelic, great musicians.

With the exception of a few half-years in California, my family and I have raised our kids here. We have a big Italian-Irish family, and I found my own Jersey girl here—thank you, Patti! In the end, I just found something deeply resonant in holding the hands of my kids on the same streets where my mom held my hand, swimming in the same ocean and taking them to visit the same beaches I did as a child. It was also a place that really protected me. It's been very nurturing. I could take my kids down to Freehold, throw them up on my shoulders and walk along the street with thousands of other people on Kruise Night with everybody just going, "Hey Bruce..." That was something that meant a lot to me, the ability to just go about my life. I was protected here, by the people here. And I really appreciated that.

You get a little older now, and you get those crisp fall days that come in September and the beginning of October. My friends and I, we slip into the cool water of that Atlantic Ocean. These days, you take note that there's a few less of your friends swimming alongside of you as each year passes. But something about being in one place your whole life: they're all still around you in the water. I look towards the shore and I see my two sons and my daughter pushing their way through the waves. And on the beach there's a whole batch of new little kids running away from the crashing surf... like time itself.

That's what New Jersey is for me. It's a repository of my time on earth. My memory, the music I've made, my friendships, my life... it's all buried here in a box somewhere in the sand down on the Jersey Shore. I can't imagine having it any other way.

Let me finish with a Garden State benediction. Rise up my fellow New Jerseyans, for we are all members of a confused but noble race. We, of the state that will never get any respect. We, who bear the coolness of the forever uncool. The chip on the shoulders of those with forever something to prove. And even with this wonderful Hall of Fame, we know that there's another bad Jersey joke just around the corner.

But fear not! Fear not! This is not our curse, it is our *blessing*. For this is what imbues us with our fighting spirit. That we may salute the world forever with the fabulous Jersey state bird, and that the fumes from our great northern industrial area to the ocean breezes of Cape May fill us with the raw hunger, the naked ambition and the desire not just to do our best, but to stick it in your face. Theory of relativity anybody? How about some electric light with your day? Or maybe a spin to the moon and back? That's right. And that is why our fellow Americans in the other 49 states know that when the announcer says, "And now, in this corner, from New Jersey..." they better keep their hands up and their heads down, because when that bell rings, we always come out swinging.

Thank you, friends, family... God Bless the Garden State! 🍷





## THE PRESIDENT ON THE BOSS

**F**inally, we honor the quiet kid from New Jersey who grew up to be the rock 'n' roll laureate of a generation. For in the life of our country, only a handful of people have tapped the full power of music to tell the real American story—with honesty, from the heart—and one of those people is Bruce Springsteen.

He has said, "I have always believed people listen to your music not to find out about you, but to find out about themselves." And for more than three decades, in his songs of dreams and despair, of struggle and hope, hard-working folks have seen themselves. They've seen their great state of New Jersey, and they've seen their America, in songs that become anthems: restless kids who are "Born to Run," the struggles of workers in "My Hometown," the sacrifice of vets who were "Born in the U.S.A.," love and loss in "Streets of Philadelphia," the resilient nation in "The Rising," and this year, a country "Working on a Dream."

It's no wonder that his tours are not so much concerts but communions. There's a place for everybody—the sense that no matter who you are or what you do, everyone deserves their shot at the American Dream. Everybody deserves a little bit dignity. Everybody deserves to be heard.

I've seen it myself. Bruce has been a great friend over the last year, and when I watched him on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial when

he rocked the National Mall before my inauguration, I thought it captured as well as anything the spirit of what America *should* be about. On a day like that, and today, I remember I'm the president, but he's the Boss.

And Bruce continues to inspire, along with his house-rockin', earth-shakin' E Street Band. At 60 years old he's still filling stadiums, still whipping fans into a frenzy, still surfing the crowd, still jumping off pianos, still reaching new fans, still being nominated for Grammys. It's been a long road from that stage at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park to this stage today. But this much we know: after more than 30 years and 120 million albums sold, Bruce Springsteen is still one cool-rockin' daddy.

Dave Brubeck, Mel Brooks, Grace Bumbry, Robert DeNiro, Bruce Springsteen. Their stories are their own, but the part that they play in the larger American story, that's what we honor here tonight. What they say is that with respect for the past, we can keep strong the traditions and values that enrich us all; with confidence in the present and in ourselves, we can overcome whatever comes our way; and that with faith in the future, America's greatest "Glory Days" are still to come. So thank you to all of our honorees, thank you all very much for the joy and the beauty you have contributed to our lives. We are very grateful. 🐾

—President Barack Obama, 12/6/09





# KENNEDY CENTER HONOR

## DEC. 6, 2009

By David Menconi

**J**on Stewart strode onstage to the strains of "Born to Run" and began his introductory remarks by telling the Kennedy Center Honors audience what he wasn't—critic, historian, archivist, someone who could explain Bruce Springsteen's place in the pantheon. Then he got to the punchline:

"But I am from New Jersey!"

It was more than enough. Springsteen has always been about connection, the desire to be a part of the tribe. The December 6 Kennedy Center Honors gala, which honored Springsteen and four other artists for their contributions to American culture, had everyone from the Commander-in-Chief on down busting out their Bruce bonafides whether they were supposed to or not.

Receiving the Springsteen and his fellow honorees at the White House prior to the gala, President Barack Obama acknowledged, "I'm the president, but he's The Boss." Ron Kovic, the wheelchair-bound author of *Born on the Fourth of July*, told of meeting Springsteen in 1978 and being moved to tears by "Darkness on

The Kennedy Center Honors 2009  
Opera House  
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
Washington, D.C.  
Sunday, December 6, 2009  
at 7:00 pm

Seat	110
Row	X
Sec.	Center
Orch.	

the Edge of Town" at his first Springsteen show. And actor Ben Stiller went off-script during his tribute to Robert DeNiro to recall a marathon Springsteen show he saw as a teenager: "Literally changed my life, you're a god, back to Bob. Sorry!"

In addition to Springsteen and DeNiro, the Kennedy Center Honors ceremony recognized jazzman Dave Brubeck, comedian Mel Brooks and opera singer Grace Bumbry. But Springsteen was unquestionably the main event, and of course his segment closed the show. Did you really think anyone could follow him?

Fittingly, the house band for the musical tribute portion of the program included four Springsteen tour veterans (guitarist Shane Fontayne, Sessions Band trombonist Clark Gayton, and vocalists Curtis King Jr. and Cindy Mizelle), plus longtime John Mellencamp drummer Kenny Aronoff. Mellencamp was up first with a powerful version of "Born in the U.S.A." that started off slow and quiet before erupting.

Eddie Vedder's "My City of Ruins" was also beautifully subdued and mournful, with a choir lending it an appropriately elegiac feel that slowly built heavenward. But that was nothing compared to the finale, Springsteen's fellow Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member Sting doing "The Rising" with all the regal grandeur the occasion demanded. When the rear-stage backdrop rose to reveal a large choir, even Springsteen himself—seated next to the Obamas on the box tier—did an impressed doubletake.

By the final chorus, everybody in the house (including the president and first lady) were on their feet to clap along. And afterward, Sting led the inevitable closing chant: "BROOOOOOOCE!" 🐉

*David Menconi is the music critic at the Raleigh (NC) News & Observer. He has also written for Spin, Billboard, No Depression, the New York Times and a host of other publications that no longer exist.*

## FROM A GREMLIN '76

Jon Stewart on Springsteen: "He empties the tank"

**I** am not a music critic. Nor historian, nor archivist. I cannot tell you where Bruce Springsteen falls in the pantheon of the American songbook. I cannot illuminate the context of his work, or its roots in the folk and oral history traditions of our great nation.

But I am from New Jersey.

And so, I can tell you what I believe. And what I believe is this: I believe that Bob Dylan and James Brown had a baby. Yes! And they abandoned this child, as you can imagine at the time... interracial, same-sex relationships being what they were... they abandoned this child by the side of the road between the exit interchanges 8A and 9 on the Jersey Turnpike. That child is Bruce Springsteen.

I believe that Bruce Springsteen is an unprecedented combination of lyrical eloquence, musical mastery and sheer unbridled, unadulterated joy. Exuberance in the act of telling stories so familiar, stories that have never been told so well or so uniquely.

And I know he's hating this right now. He's a modest man, and he doesn't like sitting there in that little box, with his little suit, wearing a little rainbow dream catcher or whatever they have on there... he doesn't like it. He wishes he had his guitar and that I would shut up, but I will not.

He is the Boss. But I didn't understand his music for a long time, until I began to yearn. Until I began to question the things that I was making and doing in my own life. Until I realized that it wasn't just about the joyful parade on stage and the theatrics. It was about stories of lives that could be changed. And that... the only thing, the only failure in life was not to make the effort to change our station. And it resonated with me because, and I say this truly to him... I would not be here, God knows, not even in this business if it were not for the inspirational words and music of Bruce Springsteen.

I was working in a bar, in New Jersey, as you would imagine, central Jersey right off Route 1. And every night when I closed the bar, I would get in my car. And I was driving, at the time, a 1976 off-brown Gremlin. The Gremlin was a car that was invented for two reasons: 1) birth control for young males, and 2) it was invented so that the Pinto wouldn't feel so bad about itself. But I would get in my car every night and I'd put in the music of Bruce Springsteen. And everything changed. And I never again felt like a loser. When you listen to Bruce's music you aren't a loser, you are a character in an epic poem... about losers.

But that is not the power of Bruce Springsteen. It is that whenever I see Bruce Springsteen do anything, he empties the tank. Every time. And the beautiful thing about this man is, he empties that tank for his family, he empties that tank for his art, he empties that tank for his audience, and he empties it for his country. And we, on the receiving end of that beautiful gift, are ourselves rejuvenated, if not redeemed. And I thank you. 🐉



## PERFORMANCES

**John Mellencamp**  
"Born in the U.S.A."

**Ben Harper**  
"My Father's House"

**Jennifer Nettles**  
"Glory Days"

**Ben Harper & Jennifer Nettles**  
"I'm on Fire"

**Melissa Etheridge**  
"Born to Run"

**Eddie Vedder**  
"My City of Ruins"

**Sting & the Joyce Garrett Choir**  
"The Rising"



E Street Radio stays on the air, Bruce plays DJ

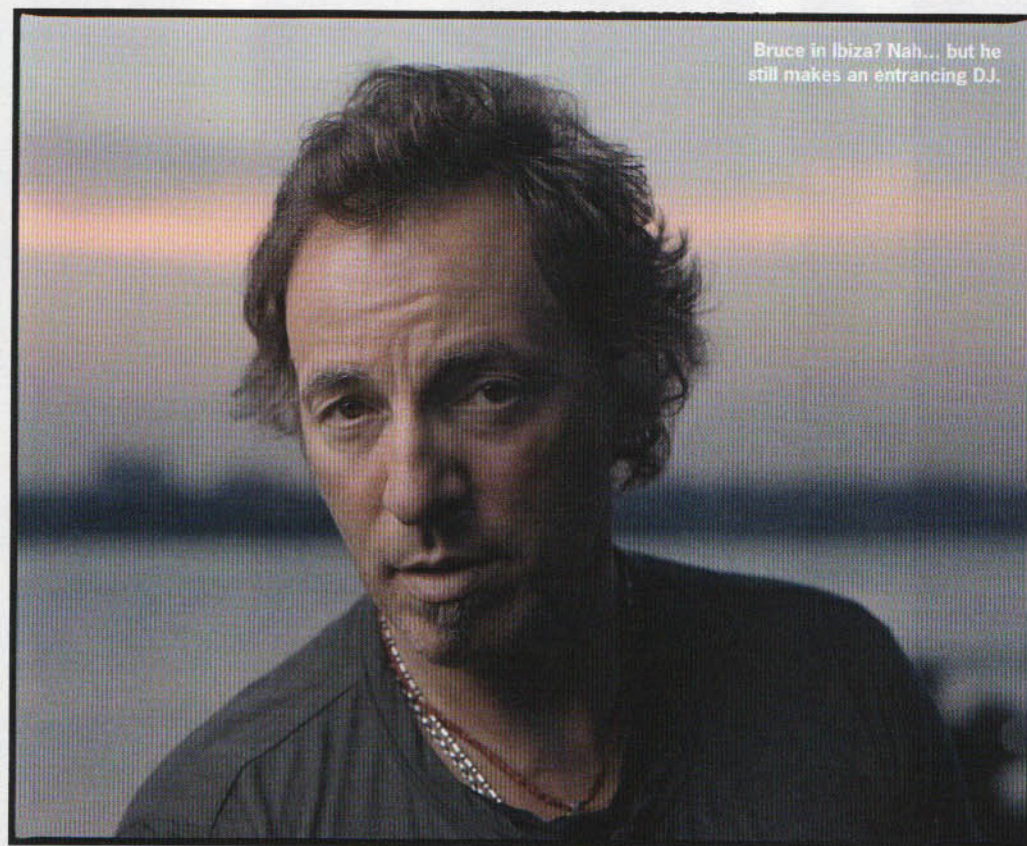
## Bouncing Off a Satellite

By Shawn Poole

**T**hanks to the recent merger of the Sirius and XM satellite radio companies, E Street Radio is now available to more subscribers than ever before. The commercial-free, all-Springsteen-all-the-time channel now airs on Sirius 10 and XM 58. Due to its ongoing popularity, the channel has been renewed several times already and is scheduled to continue airing indefinitely.

In conjunction with the release of *Working on a Dream*, the channel's programming got even more interesting, too. Dave Marsh now hosts a live call-in talk show called *Live From the E Street Nation* on Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Eastern (repeated on Sundays from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m.). Marsh usually has a different co-host or two each week, and listeners are invited to call in to discuss all things Springsteen-related.

Another E Street Radio project that was in the works for a while also was unveiled at the beginning of 2009: Bruce himself appeared as a Guest DJ on his own channel, in two seg-



Bruce in Ibiza? Nah... but he still makes an entrancing DJ.

ments airing a week apart. The segments have re-aired numerous times on the channel since,

providing an interesting and educational glimpse into the Springsteen music library (of recordings by other artists, that is). Check out the accompanying annotated playlists for the details.

Marsh was involved as well in the recording of Bruce's segments; he offered listeners occasional on-air updates as the project progressed throughout 2008. During that year, Marsh and his Sirius/XM producer Jim Rotolo traveled to Springsteen's home to record both Guest DJ segments. The experience not only produced some great radio, but also a funny behind-the-scenes anecdote that worked its way into Marsh's essay in the 2009 Kennedy Center Honors program. At some point during the visit to Springsteen's home, Bruce made a Rotolo a sandwich. In Marsh's Kennedy Center essay, after several paragraphs on Springsteen's artistry, Marsh

wrote, "OK, that's the art stuff. You probably want to know about the person.... A friend of mine claims that Bruce once served him the best turkey sandwich ever made. (I was there. It was really, really, really good.)...."

According to Marsh (who also has his music-oriented *Kick Out the Jams* show airing Sundays at 10:00 a.m. on Sirius 29/XM 50 and political talk show *Live From the Land of Hope and Dreams* airing Sundays at 2:00 p.m. on Sirius 146/XM 167), future Guest DJ sessions with Springsteen are on the agenda. Bruce himself briefly hinted at that possibility while discussing a Hold Steady track during his second DJ set. Here's hoping the possibility becomes a reality sooner rather than later, since these two sessions proved that Bruce Springsteen doesn't necessarily need a stage to create a show that entertains, inspires and enlightens. 🍌



Some of the folks who bring the world 24/7 Springsteen on Sirius/XM's E Street Radio (L-R): producer Jim Rotolo, on-air personality Dave Marsh, and engineer Morgan Hahn



# SPANK ME!

Bruce Springsteen as Guest DJ on E Street Radio: The Annotated Playlists

## PART 1 OF 2

**Broadcast premiere: January 19, 2009**

In his introduction, Bruce discusses complaints from many music-listeners "of my fine vintage" about there being no good current music, "current" defined as over the past ten or 20 years. Bruce says that he gets turned onto music a lot of different ways: sometimes his kids will play him stuff; sometimes he'll visit "one of the few remaining record stores" (he offers a "hello out there" to everybody at Jack's Music); or pick stuff because "I like the cover or they're playing it in the store." Political theme for today's show: "Goodbye to the old [Bush] administration, hello to the new [Obama administration]."

1. **Jarvis Cocker • "Running The World"**  
"A song that speaks for itself"
2. **Small Change Romeos • "01.20.09"**
3. **Jay Farrar • "Feed Kill Chain"**
4. **Rank and File • "Conductor Wore Black"**  
Were the lyrics about "this train" also an inspiration for "Land of Hope and Dreams," along with Woody Guthrie's "Bound for Glory"?
5. **Ry Cooder • "Sundown Town"**
6. **Sleater-Kinney • "The Promised Land"**  
The only cover of a Springsteen song, and the only bootleg, played in either set. Springsteen calls this "a great cover" of his song, but fails to note the performance of the guest lead vocalist—one Mr. Eddie Vedder, who recorded this live with Sleater-Kinney during their opening set for Pearl Jam in Philadelphia on 10/3/05.
7. **Jimmy Cliff • "Sufferin' in the Land"**  
1970 version from the album *Wonderful World, Beautiful People*
8. **The Dubliners • "Rising of the Moon"**
9. **Tupac Shakur • "Dear Mama"**  
Or as Bruce pronounces it, "two-pack."
10. **Bob Dylan • "Political World"**
11. **Little Steven • "I Am A Patriot"**  
Springsteen misidentifies the name of Steve Van Zandt's first record as *Men Against Women*—it was *Men Without Women*—and can't recall the name of Steve's third record, *Freedom - No Compromise*. He also says that this song is from Steve's third record, though it's actually on his second, *Voice of America*. He humorously chastises himself by yelling "Spank me!" and, thanks to some quick assistance from Dave Marsh off the air, he eventually gets the album source right after the song plays.
12. **The Sex Pistols • "God Save The Queen"**  
"The folks who re-started it all."
13. **King Crimson • "In the Court of the Crimson King"**  
"I sat in the dark in my little attic apartment in Asbury Park and listened to that ten times in a row," Bruce laughs, "and then 'Twenty-First Century Schizoid Man,' in my brief flirtation with prog-rock."
14. **Public Enemy • "Fight the Power"**  
"Their... what's that rock-critic word?... seminal... 'Fight the Power.'"

15. **Son Volt • "Underground Dream"**
16. **Warren Zevon • "Ourselves to Know"**  
"My old friend"
17. **Jelly Roll Morton • "Stars and Stripes"**
18. **James Brown • "Funky President"**
19. **Whisper in the Noise • "The Times They Are A-Changin'"**  
Before signing off, Bruce thanks "the folks from Sirius" and his "silent partner, Dave Marsh" and reiterates the theme of the show one more time: "It's been a long, long hard, eight-year ride; it's a long, long ways from fear to hope."



## PART 2 OF 2

**Broadcast premiere: January 26, 2009**

"Greetings, E Street Radio listeners, this is Bruce Springsteen here for our second session on E Street Radio.... I've tried to find some things that I thought if you're a regular listener to E Street Radio, should be in your wheelhouse or perhaps slightly outside of it.... Anyway, have a good time."

1. **Jenny Lewis with the Watson Twins • "Run Devil Run"**
2. **Arcade Fire • "Intervention"**
3. **The Blazers • "El Año Viejo"**  
From their 1994 album *Short Fuse*. Bruce translates the title as "the old year": "That's what two years of high school Spanish will get you... This was a group that I got turned onto while I was in Southern California, along with this next group...."
4. **Social Distortion • "99 to Life"**  
"Out of Orange County, led by Mike Ness.... one of the great singers and songwriters in modern rock 'n' roll right now."
5. **Calexico • "Across the Wire"**  
"What I love about their music is the way that they combine Southwestern culture and mariachi and sort of Morricone spaghetti western sounds with some great songwriting."
6. **The Hold Steady • "Stuck Between Stations"**  
"My good friends.... they've got a new record out called *Stay Positive*, which we'll get to in some future shows."
7. **Tim Armstrong • "Into Action"**  
"One of those things my son turned me on to. In the Top 40 radio that plays constantly in my mind, this thing was a smash." Armstrong is in the California punk band Rancid. This solo track originally was released online as a thank you to fans patiently waiting for the next Rancid album. Response to the track was so strong that it led to a full-fledged solo project for Armstrong.
8. **The National • "Mr. November"**  
"I love that song... great vocalist, Matt Beringer...."
9. **Bob Dylan • "Series of Dreams"**  
"One of Bob's great outtakes from *Oh, Mercy*. Whenever I occasionally run into Dan Lanois, who produced the record, I always ask him, 'Dan, how? Why? Why didn't that get on?' And of course he doesn't have the answer."
10. **Slo-Mo featuring Mic Wrecka • "Shackamaxxon"**  
A great track from an outfit Steve Klinge of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* calls "Philly's best, and only, funky hip-hop steel-guitar band." Shackamaxxon is a section in the Philadelphia area. It got its name from the region's original inhabitants, the Lenni Lenape native people. The Lenape word *Shackamaxxon* refers to "the sacred site where the chiefs sit down together to plan, to celebrate and, finally, to eat." For more info on Slo-Mo, check out [www.heyslomo.com](http://www.heyslomo.com)
11. **Wiskey Biscuit • "Santa Ana River Delta Blues"**  
Springsteen says their whole album "just feels great!"
12. **Against Me! • "New Wave"**  
"A great soulful punk band that I was turned onto by my eldest son. Speaking of sons and fathers...."
13. **Nas with Olu Dara • "Bridging the Gap"**  
Rapper Nas delivers a moving performance ("giving you the story of rock 'n' roll") with his father, jazz musician Olu Dara, sampling Muddy Waters' "Mannish Boy" in the process.
14. **Dropkick Murphys • "Never Forget"**  
High praise indeed from someone known for putting on a pretty good show himself: "These guys live are roarin'. I caught a live show of theirs at Roseland and it was off the charts. They get a thing goin' with their audience that takes it to a whole other level. Catch them if you can."
15. **Maps • "Elouise"**  
"A perfect piece of pop music... just beautiful."
16. **The Gourds • "How Will You Shine?"**  
"Man, I wish I wrote that."
17. **Marah • "East"**  
"My friends from Philly.... These guys make good record after good record after good record; somebody, dammit, buy those things!"
18. **Joe Strummer • "Ramshackle Day Parade"**  
"One of the great rock and rollers of the past 30 years; I'm gonna miss him a lot."
19. **The Avett Brothers • "Go to Sleep"**  
The Avett Brothers later contributed a version of "Glory Days" to the "Hangin' on E Street" section of Springsteen's official website. Check it out at [bruce.springsteen.net/news/hanginout.html](http://bruce.springsteen.net/news/hanginout.html), where you'll also find Against Me!'s Tom Gabel covering "Reason to Believe" among other selections from "up-and-coming artists" discussing Springsteen's influence and performing his songs. ➤

—Shawn Poole



Latest album a doozy for collectors

## How to Configure a Dream

By Peter Schoefboeck

Quite a few eyebrows were raised within Bruce Springsteen's fan community when his 16th studio effort, *Working on a Dream*, was officially announced. First, there was the rather alienating cover artwork: a decidedly cheesy image of Bruce in front of a blue evening sky with clouds, stars and a crescent moon, looking (at least to some) like it had been Photoshopped together by a third-grader during lunch break. And then, the music itself. A whistling solo? The melodic line from Kiss' 1979 disco hit "I Was Made For Lovin' You"? A song about a hot female supermarket cashier, incorporating the word "groceries" no less than three times in its lyrics? Indeed, one might say that *Working on a Dream* had its fair share of "surprise, surprise" moments, just as it spawned a considerable number of interesting collectibles—to which most of this issue's "On Disc" column is dedicated.

The album's title song (you know, the one with the whistling solo) was not only made available as an official mp3 and iTunes download in advance, but also saw "physical" release on various international one-track promo CD-Rs. Apart from the Dutch, French and U.S. issues (all of

which came with nice picture inserts) and the U.K. version (housed in a clear plastic bag with an info sticker and a basic title sheet), there was no real packaging to speak of for many of these discs other than a plain slimline jewel case; this obviously didn't prevent die-hard collectors from immediately shelling out crazy three-figure prices on eBay for any possible variant they could find.

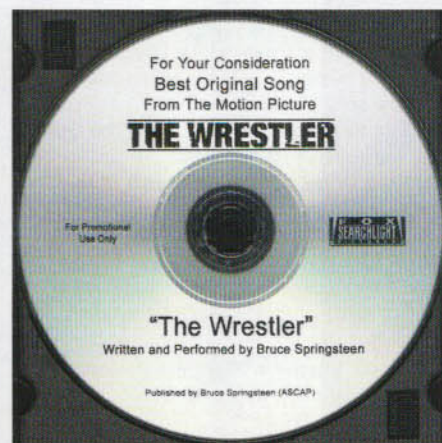
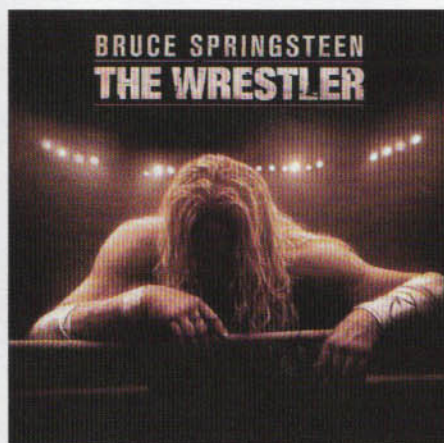
In the U.S., "Working on a Dream" also made it onto a commercially issued, factory-pressed one-track CD single with full artwork, sold exclusively at Circuit City consumer electronics stores for 99 cents. Customers buying the single also received a \$2 discount coupon good for purchase of the full album—which eventually proved worthless, as the Circuit City chain filed for bankruptcy and went out of business less than two weeks prior to the album's release, making this item something of an oddity.

Numerous other promotional releases continued to appear on the CD-R format, including two Brazilian picture disc singles of "My Lucky Day" and "Life Itself," and a U.S. seven-track *Selections From...* radio station album sampler. By far the most collectible is for "The Wrestler," the stunning acoustic tune that Bruce

wrote for Darren Aronofsky's critically-acclaimed film starring Mickey Rourke, which was also included as a bonus track on *Working on a Dream*. "The Wrestler" appeared in unique form on a promotional CD-R issued to Academy Award voters by the movie's North American distributors Fox Searchlight Pictures for consideration in the "Best Original Song" category. This disc contains the full 5:20 take of "The Wrestler" as it plays over the film's end credits, with a longer intro and extended piano coda that unfortunately was omitted for the album release. (Speaking of unfortunate decisions, it's too bad the Academy snubbed Springsteen's song altogether, although it did win him another Golden Globe, and Rourke eventually took home an

Oscar for his portrayal of Randy "The Ram" Robinson.) While later made commercially available as a video single download on iTunes, the long version remains exclusive to the Fox Searchlight CD-R in audio-only form. The regular 3:50 album edit of "The Wrestler" also got a promotional release in the Netherlands in February 2009, featuring a picture insert based on the film's poster artwork.

As for the album itself, *Working on a Dream* was widely released in three different configurations: a standard single audio CD, a deluxe CD/DVD combo, and a 2-LP set pressed on 180-gram vinyl. The double vinyl came out in both Europe and the U.S., and despite widely identical overall packaging, the American pressing distinguishes itself by includ-





ing a code coupon for a free mp3 download of the entire album—certainly not a bad idea to make the analog format more appealing to a younger generation of music fans. Meanwhile, the digital sets once again were issued in the now-commonplace (and terribly impractical) fold-out digipaks, in two different sizes (5.3" square for the single disc and 5.5" x 6" for the 2-disc variant).

The German pressing of the deluxe edition has a large white "FSK 0" logo (implying that the DVD content is exempt from classification) imprinted on its front cover and also carries a unique catalogue number. In France, a special limited-edition three-disc version added an exclusive bonus audio CD combining music and spoken word entitled "Bruce Springsteen: Sa Story Musicale Par Antoine De Caunes," which came in a separate, unique color cardboard picture sleeve housed inside the standard digipak. Sony Japan issued the two main configurations with integrated vertical obi strips, lyric translation booklets, and extra protective inner sleeves to hold the discs, making it easier to remove them from their cardboard pockets.

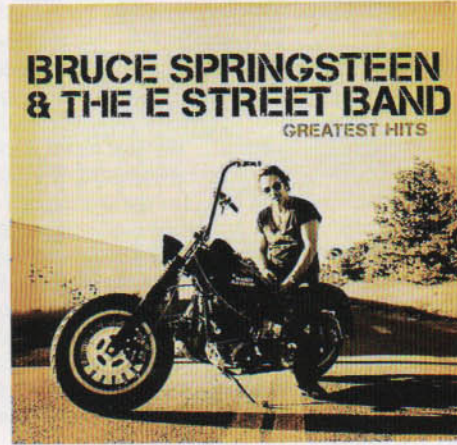
A particularly noteworthy item issued in conjunction with *Working on a Dream* is a rare 7-inch vinyl single of "What Love Can Do" backed by the non-album track "A Night With The Jersey Devil" (the video of which is included on the deluxe edition's DVD, while the audio

had been previously available only as a digital download). This 45 was pressed in a strictly limited run of 2,500 copies to promote the 2009 "Record Store Day"—an annual campaign supporting independent record dealers around the world—and marked Columbia's first commercial Springsteen release on the format in almost 13 years. Packaging con-

sists of a unique 6" x 6" black-and-white Bruce glossy slipped inside a sticker-sealed brown paper outer sleeve along with the record, which carries cool black/silver Columbia labels (similarly designed 7-inch singles by Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen were also produced for the occasion).

**NON-WOAD RELEASES:** In Spain, a special promotion by Catalan newspaper *El Periódico* featured reissues of 16 back-catalog Springsteen albums on CD in "mini-LP" cardboard sleeves, accompanied by very nice, fully illustrated, square hardcover books containing Spanish text from the pen of long-time domestic Bruce fan/collector/fanzine publisher Salvador Trepas. This original series ran from September 2008 through January 2009, with one new disc made available each week; it was later expanded to take in eight more titles including all official stand-alone DVD releases (in standard Amaray cases) plus the *Devils & Dust* and *Live in Dublin* CD/DVD combos.

Next, we have *Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band: Greatest Hits*, an odd CD sampler of 12 full-band studio cuts from 1973 to 2007. Retailing as a "Wal-Mart exclusive" in the U.S. (although it saw general, unlimited distribution in Canada as well), this





# KEEP ON DREAMIN'...

Song's official release could be preview of D&D tour DVD

Three years after the song served as Bruce Springsteen's standard set-closer on the Devils & Dust tour, a live recording of "Dream Baby Dream" became officially available in October 2008. Springsteen's reimagining of the song by influential "no-wave" duo Suicide was issued as part of a three-song EP by Blast First Petite,



an "independent sublabel" of Blast First, the label originally founded to distribute Sonic Youth's records in the U.K. This makes it one of the few Springsteen tracks officially released on a label other than Columbia.

The EP was the initial offering in an ongoing series of releases celebrating Suicide co-founder Alan Vega's 70th birthday; the other two tracks on the EP are a 1979 live version of "Dream Baby Dream" by Suicide and a version of Suicide's "Beat the Devil" by now-defunct band Mr Ray. It was issued on limited-edition 10-inch vinyl (featuring the 1994 Edward Mapplethorpe photograph "Stars" as the cover artwork) and remains available as a download via major online digital music services as well as from blastfirstpetite.com. For those who still want something physical: while the limited-edition 10-inch is no longer available from Blast First Petite, they do offer a limited edition CD (Alan Vega 70th Vinyl Series: Radio Promo CD #1) featuring the tracks from both the Dream Baby Dream EP and the second EP in the series.

Blast First Petite's MySpace page ([www.myspace.com/blastfirstp](http://www.myspace.com/blastfirstp)) also hosts an alternate version of "Dream Baby Dream," streaming Springsteen's performance of the song from July 20, 2005 in Bridgeport, CT, when Bruce acknowledged Alan Vega's presence in the audience that night and dedicated the song to him. The sound on that version, however, is nowhere near as good as on the official release. The Bridgeport version is probably an audience recording, while it is clear that the official track was recorded professionally.



It comes from a two-show run that Springsteen performed in Boston on October 28 and 30, 2005. Both nights were filmed and recorded by Springsteen's Thrill Hill Productions as part of an apparently ongoing effort to issue a DVD from the Devils & Dust tour. In his most recent *Backstreets* interview, Springsteen said, "We just haven't kind of put the finishing touches on it and found a way to get it out.... I'd like to even just sell it at the shows, or find some other way of getting it to people."

Incidentally, the EP also features a somewhat cryptic introduction to Bruce's performance of "Dream Baby Dream" in Boston: "This is for Dave.... Dave, I'm gonna send this one out to you tonight.... had a great time yesterday." Springsteen biographer Dave Marsh confirmed with *Backstreets* that he is indeed the "Dave" to whom Bruce dedicated the song; Marsh conducted the first of a series of Sirius/XM satellite-radio interviews with Springsteen on the day before Bruce's performance. —Shawn Poole

compilation caused quite a controversy. The company's often-criticized labor practices eventually elicited an apology of sorts from Bruce. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Springsteen called the Wal-Mart deal "a mistake."



More Springsteen material has been spread over a trio of Various Artists benefit CDs: Hard Rock's *Serve 3* (which opens with Bruce's 1987 solo-acoustic live rendition of the Harry Chapin song "Remember When the Music," previously exclusive to the hopelessly out-of-print 1990 Relativity release *Harry Chapin Tribute*);

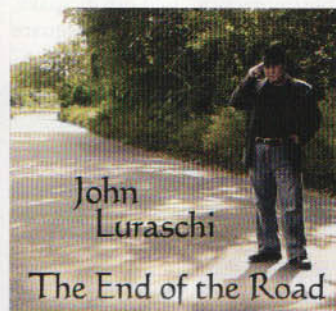


Odd Squad's Canada-only *On The Beat, Volume II* ("Point Blank"); and Sony's *Bushfire Aid: Artists for the Bushfire Appeal* double set aiding homeless survivors of the disastrous February 2009 bushfires in Victoria, Australia ("The Rising").

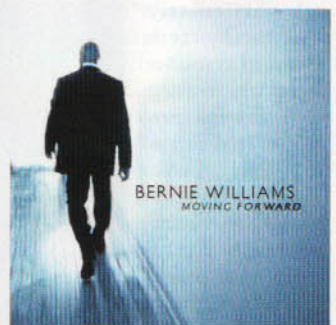


"Atlantic City" wound up on a joint U.K. 7-inch single issued as part of Parlophone's limited-edition *War Child: Heroes* box set

containing 15 vinyl 45s that couple cover versions of rock classics performed by contemporary artists on the A-sides ("Atlantic City" appears here in a rendition by The Hold Steady) and their respective original recordings on the B-sides.



In the "guest appearances" department, Bruce contributed shared lead vocals to a track on the late John Luraschi's final effort and debut album, *The End of The Road*, in support of the American Cancer Society. Luraschi, a longtime bassist on the Jersey Shore scene, was himself suffering from Stage IV cancer when Springsteen joined him on a duet version of his own composition "Savin' Up" (originally released on Clarence Clemons' first solo LP, *Rescue!*, in 1983).



Springsteen also appears on *Moving Forward*, the second CD by former New York Yankees centerfielder and classically trained guitarist Bernie Williams, which contains a neat live acoustic performance of "Glory Days" featuring both Williams and Patti Scialfa. The reack was recorded during the November 2007 Joe Torre Safe At Home Foundation charity gig in New York City. —

Peter Schoefboeck is the co-webmaster of the Springsteen collectors' website "Lost in The Flood" ([www.lostintheflood.priv.at](http://www.lostintheflood.priv.at)). Additional reporting by Mark Bahlen, Tom Gardner, Massimo Truchet and Martin Vervaart.



Recent digital EPs highlight covers, guest spots

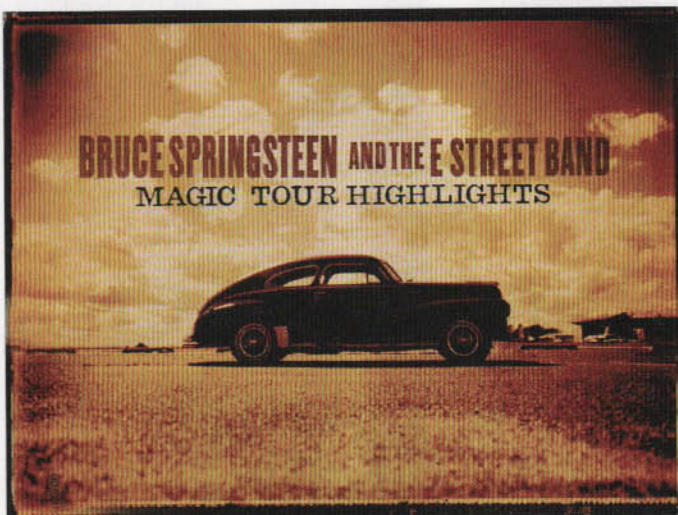
# Magic Wrecking Ball Byrds Rage

By Jeff Vrabel

**T**he Magic and Working on a Dream tours were the first since the Tunnel of Love Express 20 years earlier to prompt the release of surprise live recordings from the tour in progress. Unlike the *Chimes of Freedom* EP, they existed only in the digital realm.

The first, *Magic Tour Highlights*, a four-song value pack released online as the tour soldiered on into a post-Danny world, was foremost a labor of love—all involved waived their royalties, and all net profits went to benefit the Danny Federici Melanoma Fund. As an added bonus, the live set also served as a Bruce-approved version of those “Duets” bootlegs, with each song featuring a special guest from the March/April 2008 stretch of shows. With both audio and video files for each song, the EP includes eight tracks in all, plus a “digital booklet,” for those hold-outs who still appreciate album artwork and credits.

The first guest was, of course, the most special: *Magic Tour Highlights* is anchored by a soulful, sweet “4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)” from a March 20 performance to a not-entirely-full house in Indianapolis, an unlikely a spot as any for what was to be a moment of shadowed significance. It’s not the easiest track to watch: Bruce brings Federici on stage with a nice deflative joke that the crowd reaction will make Danny bug him for a raise, which makes the “never see you again” line that much weightier. Danny’s shrouded in shadow like Peter Pan for most of the track, though he’s front and center on stage. And after a surprisingly quick-feeling few minutes, he’s given a celebratory “Danny!” and exits stage right, closing a chapter in E Street history right there in front of you. Don’t miss the end of the video clip, which adds about a minute of the archival footage used for Thom Zimny’s video tribute to



Federici that played before many of those spring shows.

Alejandro Escovedo has said that he was actually on the road out of town when he got a call from Springsteen about playing the April 14 show in Houston; needless to say, he turned the car around. Springsteen and Escovedo turn out some harmony on the latter’s “Always a Friend” from his pretty wonderful *Real Animal* CD. Throughout the clip, Escovedo sports the kind of look you’d probably expect from a guy who got called to play at a Springsteen show about six hours before, and Springsteen seems to take quickly to the role as background “ooohs” and “ahhhs” singer.

Roger McGuinn got about the same bit of advance warning before being called up for “Turn! Turn! Turn!” on April 23 in Orlando. McGuinn has said he didn’t even know the band was in town that night until being asked down to the show via e-mail from Steven Van Zandt, an invitation that quickly turned into a cameo opportunity. McGuinn told an interviewer that he and Little Steven picked a song sort of like two teenagers trying to figure out what to do that weekend: “I don’t know, what do you wanna do?” (In the end, they went with two: the band also turned out “Mr. Tambourine Man” that

night.) But again, Springsteen and the E Streeters dig right into the role of backing band on this one, with Bruce once again handling harmony vocals to stark but successful effect, closing with a graceful double bow on the part of both frontmen.

But maybe the most out-of-left-field cameo came from Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine, who has most recently taken a break from the fire-breathing guitar trickery he’s known for to take on the role of an agit-folk singer traveling as The Nightwatchman. Morello’s solo incarnation is a fiercer (and considerably less nuanced) version of the Springsteen from “The Ghost of Tom Joad,” the track the two performed April 7 in Anaheim.

But this was no spare, dust-bowl folk: with Morello on hand, the band turned “Tom Joad” into a searing, mountainous rocker (featuring Nils on steel guitar in the periphery). Morello, carrying a guitar reading “Arm the Homeless,” rasps a few verses, but then unleashes his laser-fingered, metal-on-metal, yet oddly

melodic guitar heroism—a bit of it conjuring up his “Bulls on Parade” solo—on an extended coda that gives voice to the simmering fury that “Tom Joad” (both the song and the album) have always hinted at. This performance became a minor YouTube sensation, and while Morello and Bruce have reprised the moment since (most notably for the televised Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 25th anniversary concert), the team-up continues to blow minds. Bruce vs. Rage, after all, is only a little less likely than that time Springsteen pulled the Arcade Fire on stage—which, by the way, would have been a very welcome inclusion here.

The second digital release was “Wrecking Ball,” a sonic postcard commemorating the last-ever concerts at New York’s Giants Stadium, and a song revived as the Working on a Dream tour wound down. A \$2 package featuring a live version and video, the song served as a geographically poignant goodbye kiss to one of Springsteen’s most reliable venues, and, it could be read if you were reading into this sort of thing, the band itself.

“Wrecking Ball” was first a digital-only package, but the track recently appeared as part of the 2010 Record Store Day celebration as a 10-inch vinyl single with the *Magic Tour Highlights* version of “The Ghost of Tom Joad” as the B-side. 🐾





Bigger Than Shakespeare!

## Clarence Clemons: Still Standing

By Gary Graff

**M**ost anyone associated with Bruce Springsteen has a big story to tell. And who better to tell theirs than the Big Man? Clarence Clemons has wedged his life in and outside of the E Street Band into *Big Man: Real Life & Tall Tales*. Co-written with good friend Don Reo, a TV writer whose credits include *M\*A\*S\*H*, *My Wife and Kids* and *Brothers*, Clarence's memoir eschews the typical biography format in favor of anecdotal memories and "tall tales," enormously entertaining diversions which, in a couple of cases, are acknowledged as "total bullshit."

In his foreword for *Big Man*, Springsteen calls it "as close to the 'truth' about Clarence Clemons as I can imagine." Clemons shared a little more truth about the project as the E Streeters hunkered down in New York City shortly before their final Giants Stadium run.

*So what made this the right time to do a book?*

I think I've been writing this book all my life, y'know? Don Reo and I have been friends for a long time—we hang out a lot, we fish together a lot. One day we were out in the boat, sitting out there talking, and I was just telling stories. And he said, "You know, we should write a book." And jokingly I said, "Yeah, yeah, that's a good idea, we should do that." But after thinking about it, I thought, "Damn, that is a good idea," and we decided to do it.

*What's interesting is the way you decided to do it, having both of your voices in there, and then these great gray pages of... should we call them "factually challenged" stories?*

[Laughs] That's a good way to put it. I think they are stories that could be true, or are true in a certain aspect. You're accentuating some realities in your life, things that could have happened... and maybe did or maybe didn't.



New knees, new hips, new instrument.  
New York, NY, November 6, 2009.

A book should be entertaining. It's not just hard facts; you've got to mix it with stuff that's entertaining and interesting. I didn't just want to write an autobiography, a flat book about my life, because it could be boring. And my life is anything but boring.

*As you were writing, what was the litmus test for the stories you wanted to tell versus the stories that were best left untold?*

Well, some were untold because there will be another book! I was telling Don, we were talking about how the next book could be X-rated—some of those stories we didn't go into deeply this time we'll go through in a little more detail. But I enjoyed doing what we did and the way it was done.

*Was there anything you learned about the band through Don's eyes?*

Well, a lot of it is just memories of why we are where we are, so it brought to life how we got there. You go along in your life, and you don't think about that—you don't concentrate on how you got there or "Why is this happening? What was the catalyst to make this thing happen?" And then when you write this down and re-live it, it all comes together and makes a lot of sense to you.

*So what was the conclusion you drew about how you got here?*

I guess the conclusion is that we haven't reached a conclusion yet. We're still doing it. We are still looking for some of the answers to some of the questions—"Where do we go from here?"—so that's a big thing, that it's going to continue.

Plus there's all the physical handicaps that happened to me.

I'm coming out of those things now. There's a lot of darkness in the book, but it's not darkness left dark... you can see light at the end of the tunnel. There's a point where felt like, "I don't know how I can do this, how can I come back from the pain of the operations..." It was a tough time. But out of it came some good stuff. I cleaned up my life—not that I was a drug addict or anything like that, but in terms of a way of looking at things—and I've come to some great conclusions. I'm a lot better for it now.

*How are you feeling? A lot of fans have been worried about you.*

I was worried about me. I was in the hospital for two months, and it was the hardest time in my life. I had my legs worked on, and my knees replaced, and three hip replacements, and I had a pace-maker and all kinds of things. But those things are nothing compared to what I really wanted to do, [with] the will to get past it and go on with your life. I just thank God that I have the strength and I am feeling great again. I'm getting stronger again, all the time, and I haven't lost the energy to do it.

*Do you and Nils compare spare parts, like whose hips are better?*

Yeah [laughs]. Everything is better. I'm not a young man anymore, but I am a young man. I feel like I'm re-born.

*What was the lure of music to you in the first place, way back when?*

I grew up in a very spiritual family, Southern Baptist. My grandfather, who was very influential in my upbringing, was a Baptist preacher, and my uncle was a preacher, my brother is a preacher. So the church played a big part in my life. And all the time my grandfather was screaming about how the Devil would get you, it didn't make much sense to me because I always thought about God as being love, the feeling of love.



But when the choir sang, it changed everything for me, and I saw the power that the music had. The people would get so wrapped up in the music, they would pass out and all this stuff. It was like, wow, and that feeling in my heart, it was just exciting. So I decided, "This is what I want to do in my life. I want bring this joy to people."

So as I grew older, my search for spirituality led me to Sri Chinmoy, who was my spiritual teacher, and he told me that the purpose of my life was to bring joy and light to people, and that really lit a fire under me. I said, "This is what I've been trying to find. This is what I want to hear." And finding a way to do it was a key. How could I get there? How could I get this going? And then I met Bruce, and the conduit was there: "This is how you're gonna do it." We realized he was what I needed in my life, and I was what he needed in his life to move him there, and we were just two fortunate people to find each other.

**What is the connection that you and Bruce have?**

It's love, just basically love. What we have is love of each other and the gratitude that we found each other. That's basically what it is.

**In the book you write about that first night meeting Bruce, with the door blowing off its hinges and everything. It's not a myth, then?**

No, that was actually what happened. It was really true. I was playing with this band, Norman Seldin and Joyful Noise, and the girl Karen Cassidy kept telling me about this guy—I think he was seeing her girlfriend or something like that. But she was singing in Norman's band, and she used to drive with me to work, and she was telling me about this guy. It was, "Bruce, Bruce, Bruce, Bruce...." Oh, man... [laughs]. A couple months went by of her telling me every day about this guy who's supposed to be this big thing, and she said, "When you guys meet each other and hook up, it's gonna change music. It's gonna change rock 'n' roll. It's gonna change your life."

The opportunity came one night when we were playing at the Wonder Bar, which is about three blocks north of the Student

# BIG TIME

Clarence's memoir busts out the tall tales and wild rides

## BIG MAN: REAL LIFE & TALL TALES

By Clarence Clemons and Don Reo

366 pp., Grand Central Publishing, hardcover

By Charles R. Cross

Considering how long the E Street Band has been together, it's surprising that no band member has written their history. Danny Federici wrote a memoir a few years back, but at the last minute decided not to publish it. Max Weinberg did craft his excellent *The Big Beat*, but that book traced more of the history of other bands than the E Streeters. And in November 2009, rumors surfaced that Bruce Springsteen was contemplating, if not already composing, a memoir based on his years of journals.

In October 2009, Clarence Clemons became the first E Streeter to publish a full-on memoir with *Big Man*. The book, much like Clarence's personality, is a warm and at times ribald look back. Springsteen penned the one-page forward: "You want to be him, but you cannot. Because in all the world there is but one Clarence 'Big Man' Clemons."

Though *Big Man* boasts a number of war stories from the band's years on the road, inside scoop on Springsteen himself is in short supply. Clarence is revealing about his own peccadilloes—at times overly so—but very little of the book concerns Bruce. Clarence notes this in a preface: "I wanted to give the reader a glimpse into the personal and private side of our relationship without getting too personal and private."

We do, however, learn that Clarence himself is still such a Springsteen fan he'll listen to a live tape of "Light of Day" on the way to a show. "Sweet Jesus, he writes great songs," Clarence says of Bruce. He also reveals the secret of how he can pull so much from the catalog without so much as a rehearsal, or the teleprompter that Bruce uses. "I don't memorize the songs—I feel the songs," Clarence writes.

*Big Man* is not a traditionally structured memoir. Clarence trades off chapters with his best friend and co-writer Don Reo, and every third chapter or so is printed on grey paper to indicate that it is a fantasy section, which may or may not have any basis in reality. While some of these fantasy sequences are humorous—and find Clarence interacting with a wide cast including Fidel Castro, Norman Mailer, Thomas Pynchon, and Hideki Matsui—it's an odd device that ultimately leaves *Big Man* feeling disjointed. Clarence does introduce this element by noting that many memoirs contain stories based on false memories, and that even in his dream sequences he's attempting to tell an emotional truth if not a factual one. Still, the very fact that Clemons is an astute reader of Thomas Pynchon speaks to a wide intellect.

Reo's chapters are also distracting. A successful television producer by trade, Reo understands

show business, but his chapters dovetail into his own history too often, rather than chronicling his friend Clarence. There are some moments, however, when Reo's outsider observations detail a deeper truth that might have escaped Clemons or another's telling. Reo meets actor Damon Wayans before a concert, and Wayans expresses surprise to see an actor from *The Sopranos* backstage; Wayans apparently had no idea Steve Van Zandt was a musician, or in the band. When on the band's chartered jet, Springsteen jokes about how wide his seats are; Reo captures Bruce's sense of third-person sarcasm that an insider might have missed. Reo also reveals that Bruce and Patti never travel on the same jet together, insurance that their children won't be left orphans.

Mortality plays a major role in Clarence's portions of the book, as Clemons recounts his struggles with

an oversized body that is breaking down in many places. While Clarence's physical limitations—bad knees, hips, and back—have been obvious to any show attendee, the extent of his trials revealed here are heartbreaking. As he writes of surgeries, painkillers, and struggles to even walk, an eventual end of the band looms in the distance, implied if not written.

Nowhere is that "last days" theme more obvious than when Clarence writes about the deep friendship he had with Federici, and why he plays every show with a picture of Danny in front of him. "I miss him every day," Clarence writes. Federici also plays a role in many of the humor-

ous stories about the early E Street Band road days. There's the time Danny locked Clarence naked in the hallway, the time Clarence and Danny lived together, and the many times the band had troubles with police due to Danny's reputation. Clarence also definitively reveals the genesis of the band's name. Parked on E Street waiting for David Sancious to come to the car, Springsteen intones, "This band has spent so much time parked on this fucking street we should call it the E Street Band."

As befits the story of a man who has had five wives, some of Clarence's offstage tales are of questionable taste, as are some of the jokes. *Big Man* would have been better served better by a stronger editing hand and more on the music. There are also a handful of errors like misspellings of the names of David Gahr, Eric Meola, and Vini "Mad Dog" Lopez. The last of these may have been intentional: Clarence and Vini hated each other and came to blows.

Yet if Clarence's bio is randy, filled with bad jokes, and borders at times on bragging, well, that's exactly what you might hear any night backstage at Clemons' "Temple of Soul" dressing room. And when he writes about the music, whether it's Bruce's songs or other greats that influenced him, he is sharp, witty, and insightful. You come away from *Big Man* much like you come away from an audience with Clemons himself: feeling immensely entertained and the better for it. 🐉





Prince, where Bruce happened to be playing that night. And it was a cold, rainy night and the wind was howling, this Northeaster was blowing through Asbury Park. And I made my way down the street with my horn to the Student Prince.

This was back in the day when black people were on one side of the track and white people were on the other side, and never the twain shall meet. But I had this search in my heart; I had to find what it was that I needed to fulfill my life, and it took me to this point of going to the Student Prince and being the only black man who was in the house, standing in the doorway with this thunder and lightning behind me.

I walk in and I see Bruce and I say, "I want to sit in." And what's he gonna say? "No" to this big black guy walking in the door to this place? So I just sat in with him, and the reality of the whole thing came to life. We looked at each other, and I will never forget his face or how I felt. After we looked into each others' eyes we kind of saw what was happening. We saw the whole deal.

And when I walked out of there, I knew that we would be together. I knew this was gonna be big.

A few weeks later I quit Norman, and Bruce asked me to play on his album, his first album, and I did, and it was good. That's how it all started.

*It's a very nice part of the book when you write about being on the road with Ringo in '89 and getting the call from Bruce that he was breaking up the band. What were you feeling?*

Well, for the first maybe half an hour, 45 minutes, I was very angry. But then the reality of it all came, and my spirituality was involved... I said, "I know this is what he wants to do, and I say then it's fine." I was thankful for the opportunity that I've had to meet all these people, and now I could also get on with my life and search out some things of my own. But I said to myself, "This is not forever. This is just temporary while Bruce tries other things." And so I got through it. For the first half an hour or something, I was extremely hurt, because I had these dreams of us getting to this point—and we

hadn't gotten there yet. It came to a screeching halt for a few minutes. But then as I thought about it, I knew it would come back. And it did, and here we are.

*What's not in book is anything about the Blood Brothers reunion of the mid-'90s, which was the first step in getting things back together.*

Yeah, that's what I was waiting for. It came at the time of my birthday. I had a big birthday party coming up, and all of my friends were invited, and I got the call from Bruce the day before—he was gonna be in New York the next day. And I forgot to call my friends and tell 'em the party was off—I had visions of all these people walking around my yard wondering where the hell I was... and I was in New York!

On the plane ride back from New York to California all these thoughts came into my mind: How did I feel? Was I angry? Was I...? But it was all joy. I didn't feel that anxiety, and when we went to the studio that night it was like we had never left each other. It was one of the coolest things that had ever happened in my life.

*What is your take on this year's shows, especially the impromptu audibles and audience requests?*

That's something that really shows the confidence that he has in his band, and it shows how great this band really is. I don't know if any other band could just grab a song in front of 60,000 people that you've never played before and play it and play it damn good. He just shows us the key, and we've been together so long and been in the business so long that everybody knows just about every song. It's a great challenge and it feels great to do it, and you look forward to having this opportunity to do stuff like that. It's really fantastic.

*Have any of the fan requests, the signs, completely floored you?*

There's no song that has really thrown us. The Rolling Stones thing one night ["(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction"], we just jumped right on it and killed it. There's a lot of stuff that comes up—one night it was funny, someone held a sign for "Hava Nagila," and we did it. Some songs are really surprising. He has the confidence in his band to just do it.



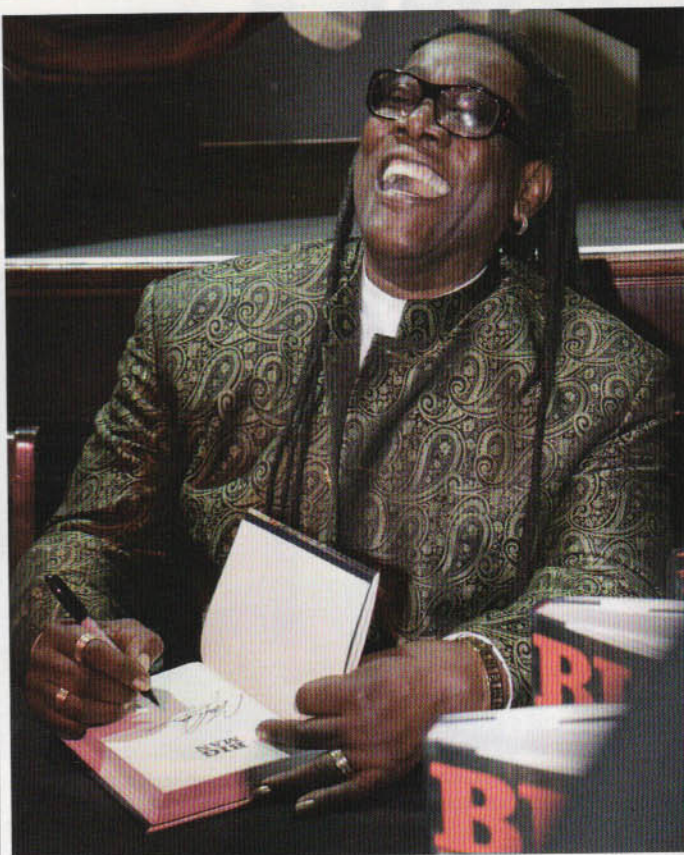
The final morning of recording for *Born to Run*, July 20, 1975.

BARBARA PYLE PHOTO





At the 11/6/09 release party for *Big Man* at the Hard Rock in Times Square: with co-author Don Reo (above); and autographing for fans (right).



**Do you have a favorite Springsteen song after all these years?**

I guess "Jungleland" is one of my favorites, but after playing these albums back to back like this, the whole thing has been so wonderful. It's hard to pick out a song, because each one has a memory or some thought from the past that stimulates such great feelings.

**There's an interesting story about the "Jungleland" solo that we know and love that you write about in the book.**

Yeah, it was 16 hours of standing in front of the mic playing every note, picking out the right thing, trying each riff different ways 'til you come up with the definitive version of the solo. It was a wonderful experience. It *did* take 16 hours of standing in front of the mic; I don't even think I went to the bathroom in those 16 hours! I got so immersed in creating this solo that when we finished we said, "That's it. We've got it," and we looked at each other and smiled. And he looked at me and says, "Do you know how long we've been here?" "Four or five hours?" To me it felt like four or five hours. It was 16 hours, man.

**And that was the last thing recorded before you guys went out and hit the road, right?**

Right. We went downstairs, got in the van and drove somewhere for the first gig. We went right from the studio to the first gig.

**Bruce did the foreword for *Big Man*. At what point did you show him the book?**

Well, I was getting the manuscript together, and one day I was reading it on the plane and he asked me, "Is that the book?" and I said, "Yeah," and he said, "Do you mind if I take a look at it?" He took it to his seat and he came back about 45 minutes later and said, "Man, this is fantastic. This is great," and that was the best thing I ever heard. That thrilled me so much that he accepted and appreciated what I was doing, and he gave me his blessing. So that's the involvement he had with it, to give me his blessing and most recently to allow me to have the book at the show, to talk about the book at the show and, you know, call me "author" in the introduction. It's pretty great.

**Was Jon Landau's sphincter a little tight until he saw it?**

[Laughs] No, he read it before Bruce did, and he loved it and he said, "This is fantastic," so I got the blessing from both of those guys and that was all I needed. That's the big key, to get the blessing from above in doing something like this.

**How are you feeling about this current incarnation of the band with Charlie and with Jay up there? Can you compare and contrast? It sounds like it still feels good.**

It still feels really good. The band is set, you know; you might make some changes, but the heart of band is still there. It's

so great having Max's son coming and filling in for him. That's really an amazing thing. And Charlie, he's great. He's got this whole thing down, and I tell you he has worked hard to be able to do this. I really love him for his dedication; it's like jumping on a train going a hundred miles an hour when you walk on that stage with Bruce, and he's handling it so well. Also Curtis and Cynthia, the background singers, they became part of this band really, really fast, and I guess that is why Bruce chose these people. They were ready to do it.

**What is your sense of what's next for Bruce and for the E Street Band?**

Well, I don't know, but whatever it is, it is going to be fantastic. That's one thing I've learned in all these years we've been together: that whatever change he makes, whatever route he takes, it is going to be fantastic.

**If Bruce takes some time away from the E Street Band next, what will be on your docket?**

I still have the Temple of Soul, the new version of my band, with Narada Michael Walden and T.M. Stevens. These guys are doing their own things, but the Temple

of Soul still lives in their hearts and we'll do another album. But right now it's the book and it's Bruce and another book.

**You've done a few "final" shows recently at some of the band's regular haunts: Giants Stadium, the Spectrum in Philly. What are those like?**

It's just a sign of the times, you know? It reminds you how long you've been in this business and how many times you've played there before... all the people, the memories of groups that have played there, people who have played here and gone on. It is kind of a sad thing. I have mixed emotions.

**But the important thing is you're still standing, even if they aren't.**

Yeah, I'm still standing. You know it. 🐉

Backstreets contributor Gary Graff is a music journalist based in Detroit and the editor of *The Ties That Bind: Bruce Springsteen A to E to Z* (Visible Ink Press). His new book, *Travelin' Man: On the Road and Behind the Scenes with Bob Seger* (Painted Turtle) with Tom Weschler features previously unpublished photos from Springsteen and Seger's first meeting in 1978.



Greece is the word  
The eBay Shuffle

By Eddy Wehbe

In August 2009, collector Peter Schoefboeck started a thread on the *Greasy Lake* discussion board ([www.greasylake.org](http://www.greasylake.org)) for fans to discuss official collectibles and share insight into their collections. Soon it became one of the most successful Springsteen discussion threads on the internet, with many veteran collectors reopening their dusty record boxes and many “newbies” joining in the fun. That’s the inspiration for this new *Backstreets* column, where we’ll review rare collectibles, discuss new discoveries, and go through the latest major eBay auctions. Our goal is to keep collectors up to date with what’s going on in the Springsteen collecting world, and at the same time provide an interesting read for non-collectors as well.

Collecting is about much more than “dealing”—detective work is part of the action, too. A recent example is a follow-up to an item in a 1994 article on fake and bootlegged items that ran in issue #46 of this magazine. In it, Charles R. Cross discussed a CD sampler that was exclusively issued in Brazil three years earlier. Titled *Ao Vivo*, it was originally officially released on in vinyl and cassette in 1986, culling ten tracks from the *Live/1975-85* boxed set. Cross, after considering some suspicious factors, wrote that “in most likelihood, the *Ao Vivo* [CD] is a counterfeit.”

Recent in-depth research, however, has led to the conclusion that the CD version of the 1986 Brazil-only sampler is actually authentic. It was first pressed in Brazil in 1991 by “Microservice-Microfilmagens E Reproducoes Tecnicas LTDA” under the CBS trademark, and later reissues (released between 1992 and 1998 under the Columbia trademark) were manufactured at Sony’s own Brazilian pressing plant which opened in 1992. *Ao Vivo* is neither particularly rare nor valu-

able, but authenticity is clearly important in collecting.

The online auction site eBay is now firmly established as the principal sales medium for Bruce Springsteen collectibles, both authentic and, unfortunately, fake. At any one time across eBay and its affiliates there could easily be around 20,000 Springsteen and Springsteen-related items. These range from one-cent bargains up to multi-thousand dollar rarities, and we’ve picked a few notable recent items to highlight here.

In his discography appendix of the 1986 book *Blinded By the Light*, former major UK collector Chris Hunt referred to the existence of a Greek pressing of the 1975 “Born to Run”/“Meeting Across the River” seven-inch single issued for promotional distribution only. For more than 20 years, the item did not turn up anywhere (at least in the collecting community), which made collectors doubtful about its very existence. This was until early 2008, when major Japanese collector Yosuke Ono sent scans of a copy he owned to Peter Schoefboeck and Alf Weber’s collectors’ website *Lost In The Flood* ([www.lostintheflood.priv.at](http://www.lostintheflood.priv.at)). Later in the year, Yosuke-san liquidated his massive and impressive collection, selling most of it on eBay. His very good condition copy of the Greek “Born to Run” realized almost \$4,000—arguably a rea-

sonable, or at least justifiable, figure for such a unique rarity from an acknowledged collector.

Fast forward to September 2009, and a second specimen surfaced; a Greek seller new to eBay discovered a near mint copy and put it up for auction. Perhaps surprisingly, it only achieved slightly little less than \$1,600, while more common (though still extremely rare) Springsteen records have been scoring much higher figures. In part this difference can probably be attributed to doubts over the provenance of the second record and the seller, highlighting the importance of seller ratings on eBay. The purchaser reports the second record to be genuine—just as well for \$1,600!

Although not quite in the same “high-end” category, another very interesting item not widely known before surfaced on eBay in late September 2009: A rare promo version of the “Brilliant Disguise”/“Lucky Man” seven-inch single from Holland. The item was issued exclusively to the first 400 attendees of the so-called *Springsteendag*, a convention held by the (unofficial) Dutch fan club “Bruce Springsteen Vereniging” at Amersfoort, Holland, in the fall of 1987. Since the 45 was not yet physically available at the time of the event, winners received a note from CBS with details on the limited edition (which was later shipped to them) as well as general information in Dutch

about the “Brilliant Disguise” single and *Tunnel of Love* album. The picture sleeve features a special four-line “Promotional Copy, Not For Sale, Attentie CBS, Springsteendag ‘87” imprint on the rear in the lower left corner, while the disc itself is a standard domestic red label stock copy. This item—complete with the CBS note—changed hands for the bargain price of AUS \$100 (the seller being located in Sydney).

Also highlighting variations on eBay were two sales within less than a week in August/September 2009 of the extremely rare 1978 Dutch “Badlands”/“Candy’s Room” seven-inch single. One in excellent condition brought in a “respectable” \$1,600; while the second in similar, if not better, condition achieved “only” \$900. In the case of the second one, the seller placed a low fixed price and the buyer moved quickly to secure an attractive deal.

Another surprisingly low price was paid for a near-mint-condition specimen of the mega-rare 1981 Japanese “Hungry Heart” four-track 12-inch EP (a.k.a. “The Killer Tracks From The River”) which managed to fetch only a mere \$455: a very low figure for the rarest Springsteen 12-inch EP in existence. In this case the seller failed to highlight (or possibly didn’t realize) exactly what the item was, and a number of potentially interested collectors must have failed to spot it.

Overall, there does seem to be a general slight downward trend in the value of items that have been considered rare; perhaps as the internet widens awareness of Springsteen merchandise, perhaps because of the global recession. Moving forward, we will monitor trends. Collecting is fun, and given Bruce’s lengthy and fantastic career, there is plenty out there to keep people interested. All you need is one cent, plus postage. 📮

Additional reporting by Peter Schoefboeck, Mike Simpson, and Alessandro Cattaneo





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\* Bruce Springsteen, 60 anni il 23 settembre, è l'unico straniero ad aver raggiunto 10 volte il primo posto nella classifica italiana degli album. Sarà in concerto il 19 luglio a Roma, il 21 a Torino, il 23 a Udine.

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IN QUESTA INTERVISTA  
ESCLUSIVA, LUI RICAMBIA

— di Leonardo Colombati — foto Danny Clinch

**Salman Rushdie**  
VOGLIO CANTARE ANCH'IO



# BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

## *my deal with the devil*

By Leonardo Colombati

**H**e sold more than 160 million records. He won an Oscar, two Golden Globes, 19 Grammy Awards. In the last 35 years he managed to sell 25 million tickets for his shows. If you check the list of the most powerful celebrities in the world recently published by *Forbes* his name is at number six: Bruce Springsteen.

When I met him a couple of years ago backstage at the Köln Arena, we chatted a little bit about literature (and specifically about Philip Roth, "another New Jersey hero") and then he confessed that rockin' all over the world was still his priority: "I really love to rock the house! Look at tonight's setlist. You see? We'll play 26 songs and only two of them are slow".

In September Bruce will turn 60, but if you have seen him live recently you can confirm Albert Einstein's smart intuition about the relativity of time. Today the Boss is in Stockholm, and we talk before the second of his three sold-out gigs in the old Olympic Stadium. My first question is: "How do you do that?"

"How do I do what?"

It's practically ten years that you've been on tour, and in the last seven years you have made five studio albums. You were never so prolific as you are now, not even at the beginning of your career. It's like the Stones in the Decca years.

"Focusing is the secret," he says. "You get a little older and you have a defined amount of time for doing your work and enjoying your friends... I also believe that I learned how to do my job in a more efficient manner that allows me to get more [out], to put out good music out to my audience. I think that when I was young I had a lot of insecurity—I would second-guess everything, and the creative intelligence that allows you to make good choices while you're writing wasn't as fully developed. I had a little bit of a shot-

### THE BOSS TALKS TO A NOVELIST

(who's also a friend and a fan) about time, love, and music, confessing his commitment to rock the house on tour in Europe

gun approach, where I was writing a million things and then trying to go back and choose what was right. Now I write very concisely. I have few outtakes from my albums, but with the songs I've written and demoed I know that I have something that's gonna make a good record before I even step into the studio. That allows me to do a few more records and to tour more constantly, which I love doing. And I have to thank my wife, Patti, who has taken a large share of the burden at home with the children, so that I can come over here and be able to tour for my fans."

Actually, Patti Scialfa didn't come for the European leg of the Working on a Dream Tour because she has to take care of Evan (19), Jessica (18), and Sam (15). What is amazing is that a few days ago, in the Netherlands, half of the audience was the same age as Bruce's three kids.

"That's true," he reckons. "We have a new audience that comes each tour, we seem to gather new young faces. Most of those guys weren't even born when I made *Born in the U.S.A.* That's another reason why this has been a very prolific and active time for myself and the band."

Every time we talk about passing of time during our conversation, I notice that Bruce tends to be more serious and passionate. Although it's clear that he made a deal with the devil, he's running into "those crisp fall days that come along in September," as he put it. I wonder if that's why he chose to make some pop songs for *Working on a Dream*.

The sound of the great records made by the Beach Boys, The Byrds, and the Beatles is perfect for emphasizing the main themes of the album, which are Love and Time.

"Yes, or to put it in other words, the transcendence of Time in Love," he says. "It was a talent that I had in the early days of my career to build those kind of arrangements that I hadn't used very much during the past ten or 15 years, when I tended to strip the band down to a more rock sound—rock 'n' roll, folk-rock, roots.... I kind of tilted away from those very rich pop arrangements until we got a little bit of it on *Magic* with 'Girls in Their Summer Clothes' and 'Your Own Worst Enemy.' I really enjoyed making them, because I love those big, sweeping, pop records. And now I had my little opera with 'Outlaw Pete,' and then 'Queen of the Supermarket,' 'Kingdom of Days,' and 'This Life'—all little symphonies that sort of tackled different adult issues. It was very enjoyable."

*Working on a Dream* is an album full of happiness and melancholy. People, in America and in Europe, are living times of fear and anguish. Is that the reason why you play only a few songs off the new album and you pick up some of the most political songs in your catalog, like "Seeds," "Johnny 99," and "The Ghost of Tom Joad"? Your fans call that the "Recession Suite."

"We do try to do a variety of things. We want to entertain, and we want to bring joy and a smile to our audience's faces. We also want to inform and reflect times we are living through. When I put a set together for a tour, those are the requirements that I have before I feel that I've created something that is in the tradition of what we've pursued in our work life. You know, after 9/11, in 2002 we had *The Rising*, then we had *Magic* a couple of years ago that addressed a lot of the issues of the Bush administration, the Iraq war.... And so, this record came right between those things and the Obama campaign."

A campaign that Bruce endorsed by playing in various rallies before the Inauguration Celebration held in Washington last January, an unforgettable afternoon opened by Bruce,

This article originally ran in the June 17, 2009 issue of *Vanity Fair Italy*. Printed by Backstreets with permission, and with gratitude to the author and *Vanity Fair Italy* for the English translation.

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who played "The Rising" in front of 500,000 Americans gathered at the Lincoln Memorial. A few days before, Obama said, "I decided to run for the presidency because I can't be Bruce Springsteen...."

"There was a lot of hope out there," Bruce says, "and there remains a lot of hope out there, but the times also became hard—the country was nearly driven off the cliff by the last administration."

#### **It was the end of a nightmare.**

"Yeah, and so I needed some music on this tour that's gonna reflect the consequences of the choices that we made. So I went back to 'Seeds,' 'Johnny 99,' 'The Ghost of Tom Joad,' Steven Foster's song 'Hard Times.' You know, my favorite promise is to tell the bad news and the good news."

The good news for his fans is that Bruce is still the best live performer in town. Someone said that the world is split in two: those who adore Bruce Springsteen, and those who have never seen him in concert. People who attended his last shows can easily confirm that. The E Street Band is having a lot of fun.

**Now you've started to play a game called "stump the band."**

"That's something that just happened. I started to pick a sign or two out of the audi-

ence, and more signs showed up, and then somewhere towards the end of the last tour it became a little bit of a thing that we did. And now I save a place each night, I leave three or four songs blank on our setlist, and the band knows that I'm gonna run out there and grab a few signs and we're gonna see what the audience wants to hear right now. That allows the audience to get their hands on the show, it opens the show up and brings a lot of warmth, and it breaks that wall between the audience and the performer down. You know, we don't have a rigid setlist from town to town. We are here tonight responding to you, and with your input we would give you a show that is uniquely yours and only gets played in your town."

#### **How is it working out with Jay?**

"Jay is a phenomenon!" Springsteen says. "A 18-year-old drummer is not supposed to be able to sit in that seat and perform the way he does. An 18-year-old drummer—he's barely supposed to play in time! He prepared very deeply with his dad. He takes a certain amount of Max's style that is recognizable and he infused it with his own style. You know, he's playing in punk rock bands, very hard rock and heavy metal bands, and he brings some of that energy. He's excited to play with the band, and he's a lovely, lovely kid".

**I believe that Jay is proof that the E Street Band is not only a rock band, but it works**

**like a family. When you see the E Street Band live you can feel that sense of brotherhood—what Walt Whitman called the "dear love of comrades."**

"To have the only other guy on that seat in 35 years be that guy's son is a wonderful thing for the band."



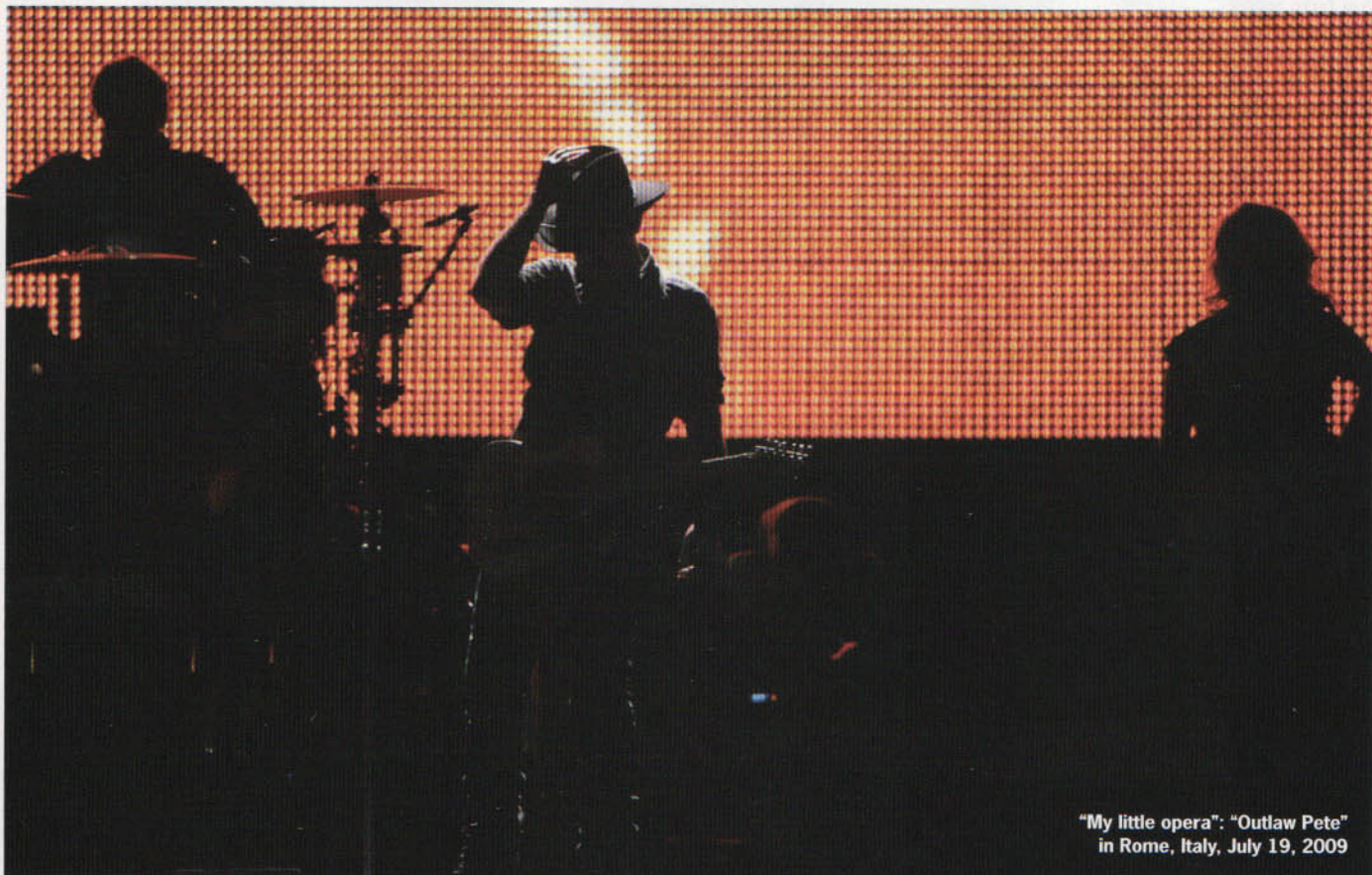
Bruce still doesn't know if it will be Jay or his father on the drums when the tour hits Italy. There are three shows on schedule: Rome (July 19), Turin (July 21), and Udine (July 23). With *Working on a Dream*, Bruce became the first foreign artist to reach the #1 position ten times on the Italian album chart.

"Wow, that's incredible!" he says. "The Italian audience was always one of the most deepest and the most loyal and fanatic... It's an endless pleasure to come back to Italy, it's always magic. I always look forward to coming back."

**It's a love story that started 24 years ago, when you played at S. Siro Stadium in Milan for the first time.**

"I remember that show pretty well."

Last time that we met, we recalled your second concert at S. Siro, in 2003...



"My little opera": "Outlaw Pete" in Rome, Italy, July 19, 2009



RENE VAN DIEMEN PHOTO

"Yeah. After a couple of songs it started to rain very heavily, and we thought that we had to stop because of the lightning. But none of you 60,000 crazy Italians moved, so we continued to play... and the result was one of the five most amazing shows of my entire career."

Talking about Italy: Sergio Leone, a film director who exerted a big influence on your work, died exactly 20 years ago. The first track of *Working on a Dream*, "Outlaw Pete," reminds me of the atmosphere of the soundtrack of *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*.

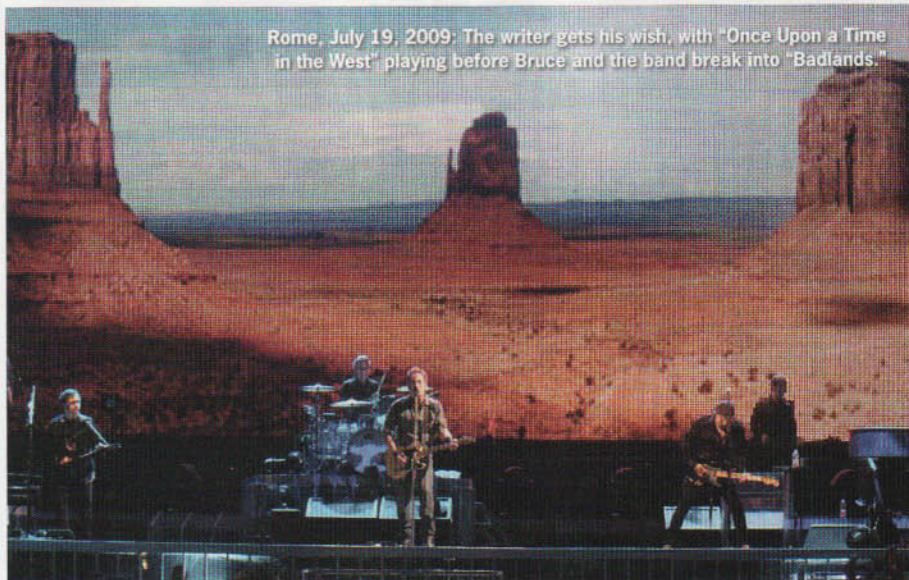
"It was a little homage," he laughs. "I had a cowboy song, and I said I got to dress this up with a little bit of Ennio Morricone's style. They were fabulous movies, and of course Ennio is one of the greatest composers for film in the world. He made an incredible body of work. A lovely man, I had the honour of meeting him a couple of times."



Some say that rock 'n' roll started to lose its power since iTunes put the idea of the album in a critical position. The album format—its length, its structure, the lyrics printed on the sleeve—requires a certain attention; it's an experience similar to reading a book. The best artists of the '60s, the '70s, the '80s, trusted in that kind of attention and that's why they could use their expressive freedom at its maximum potential even if they were doing mainstream music. Take the Beatles, for instance: in five years, they moved from "Love Me Do" to "A Day in the Life," and people were following them. Now it seems to me that the new ways of listening to music don't allow the same liberty. How do you deal with that?

"My theory is that you have to go about your business the way you go about your business. In other words, the world of music—and the world, period—changes constantly. If you live to be my age, you've seen great changes, you know? When I started recording, there were only records. Then I saw the cassette tapes, I saw CDs... These things change on ten-year or 12-year cycles, and they will continue to change probably forever. What doesn't change is the artist's commitment to his audience, his commitment to be understood, his commitment to creating a body of work that hopefully will have meaning for the listeners; and then you have to trust that that work will be communicated to those listeners in some way. Maybe not the way you intended, but I think there are people out there who are always searching for a deeper experience."

"Rock 'n' roll has been like a secular reli-



Rome, July 19, 2009: The writer gets his wish, with "Once Upon a Time in the West" playing before Bruce and the band break into "Badlands."

gion in the second half of the 20th Century: there were people who sought a context for the answers to the daily life and daily problems, and to dance and to be exhilarated and helped through struggling times, you know... My job is to provide content and music that would address those issues. That is the way that I serve my people and my audience. The only thing that I know to do is to continue to do that, and then I look to the vehicles that are available to me at any given time, whether it's the internet or a cassette tape or digital press, whatever.... So that's the way that I approach this issue. I don't have all the answers, and everybody does it in a different way. You know, I used to love the big album covers, they were magic. Well, they're gone now, something else is there. You are livin' your times, and I always thought that if Shakespeare were alive today, he would be on the internet!"

Talking about secular religion, I always thought that Dylan and yourself were the authors of pop music's New Testament, the first who talked about adult issues in rock 'n' roll. You wrote "Thunder Road" in your 20s, but even then you had that line that says, "We ain't that young anymore." Your characters always live with the uncertainty, the contradictions and the compromises of the adult world, and maybe that's why "Thunder Road" spoke to me when I was 15 years old and continues to speak to me now.

"That was a funny song," Bruce recalls. "It was recognizing the loss of innocence that was throughout post-Vietnam America. Why did I say that I wasn't young anymore? Because nobody after Vietnam was truly young or innocent anymore. Somehow, we all felt responsible for the times we lived in, and not even a 24-year-old young man could feel young in the early '70s after 50,000 dead. Those were extremely adult issues, and if you were a teenager you had to face it because of

the draft—you couldn't ignore the course of history in those days. Everyone knew someone who died, everyone knew someone who didn't come back from the war. I liked the romance of rock 'n' roll, but I had also to face the sense of the real world. We were all sort of romantic realists, you know... and I still I am, I think."



Show time is near. But I want to know about Bruce's future releases.

In the last couple of years you wrote some solo stuff...

"I'm always writing," he laughs. "I write all the time."

Will it be your next project?

"I don't know. I think that the E Street Band will probably take a rest for a little while. But it will all happen again. We're lifers—we're gonna go on forever."

What about the *Darkness* box set?

"Oh yeah, that's something we're working on. We take it slow and try to put something together that would be nice for fans."

Bruce, before we finish... We were talking about requests. Can I make mine?

"Sure."

I would love to hear "Once Upon a Time in the West" while you are taking the stage in Rome, like you have a couple of times in the past...

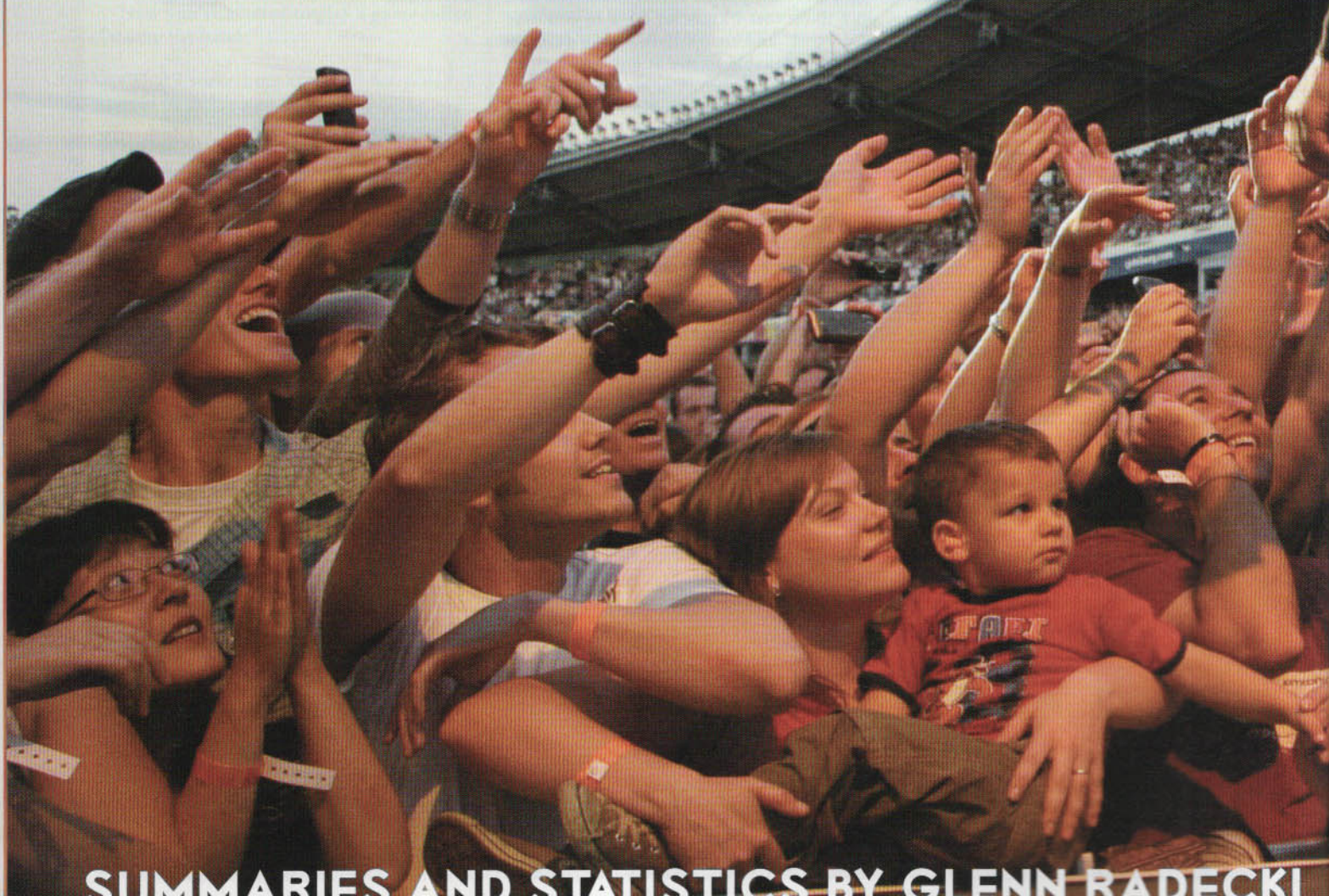
"Okay, let me write it down and see what we can do! Take care, my friend." ➔



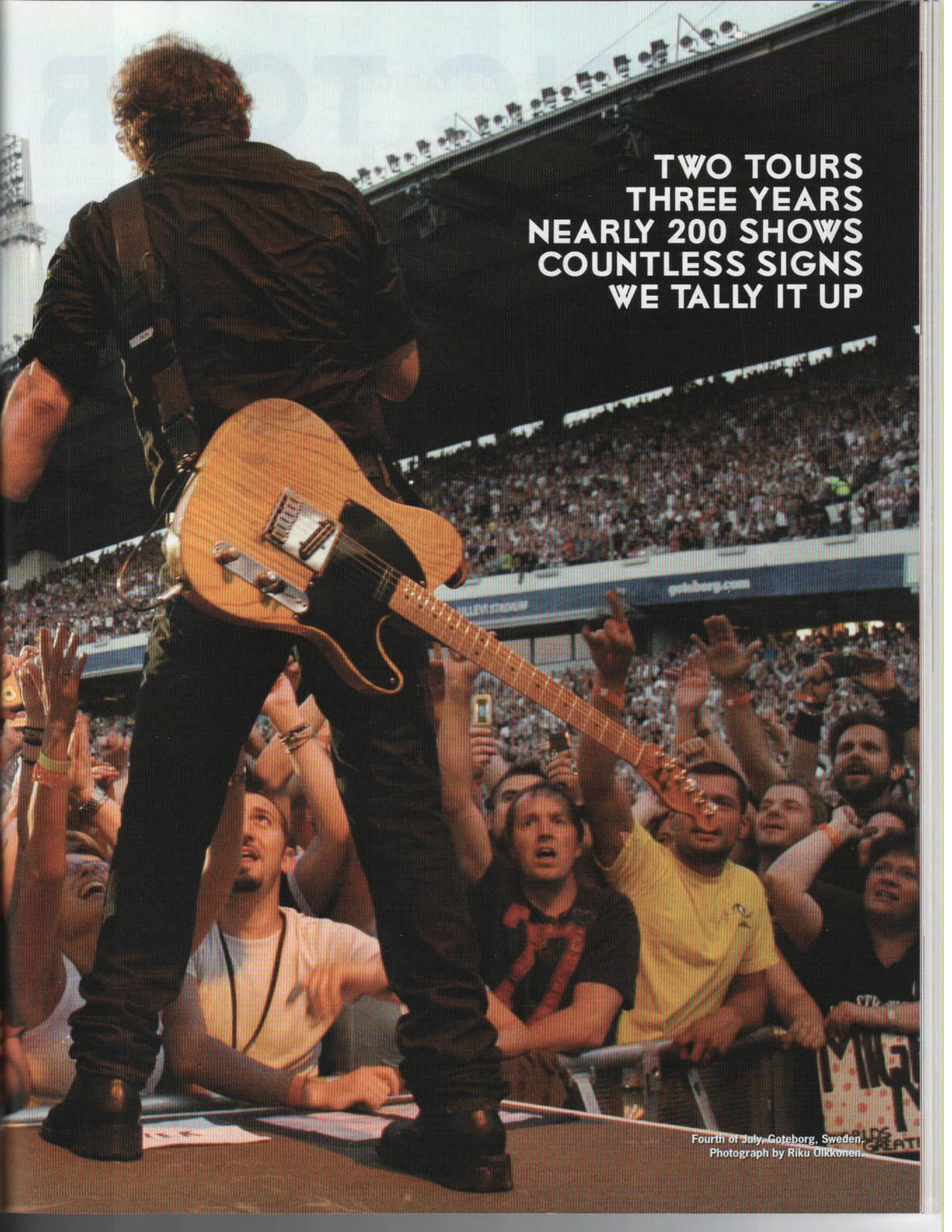
# I'LL WORK FOR YOUR LOVE

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN  
& THE E STREET BAND  
ON THE ROAD,  
2007-2009**

**SUMMARIES AND STATISTICS BY GLENN RADECKI**







**TWO TOURS  
THREE YEARS  
NEARLY 200 SHOWS  
COUNTLESS SIGNS  
WE TALLY IT UP**

Fourth of July, Göteborg, Sweden.  
Photograph by Riku Oikarinen



# MAGIC TOUR

October 2007 - August 2008

**A**fter seven days of rehearsal, three public rehearsal shows, and an early-morning appearance on the *Today* show, the Magic tour commenced in Hartford, CT on October 2, 2007. New to Bruce's live show were eight songs from *Magic*, most of which held their spots in the set for the majority of the tour, including "Radio Nowhere" and "Gypsy Biker" in the opening run of songs and "Last to Die" paired, as on the album, with "Long Walk Home" at the end of the main set. Also new to the E Street show was "American Land," carried over from the Seeger Sessions tour as the show-closing number. Patti Scialfa enjoyed a featured moment with her own "Town Called Heartbreak," which she and Bruce sang as a duet. A new blues boogie arrangement of "Reason to Believe" that debuted late in rehearsals made the show and was one of the biggest highlights of the first half of the tour. As the tour traveled to the usual large markets in the U.S. and Western Europe in the fall of 2007, the show retained a brisk pace, typically running two-and-a-half hours and 23 or 24 songs in length.

The shows slowly evolved as they typically do on Springsteen tours: the back catalog was opened up gradually, although the *Magic* songs remained the frame of the show. Sadly, the biggest change to the tour came after an emotional show in Boston on November 19, the last night of the first U.S. leg, when it was announced that Danny Federici would be leaving the tour for health reasons. Charlie Giordano, who had played keyboards and accordion on the Seeger Sessions tour, ably stepped in, and the tour continued with an extensive run through the U.S.

Highlights from the spring of 2008 included Bruce working sign requests into the show as a regular feature and a return appearance by



Going public: on the *Today* show, Bruce kicks off a two-year E Street Band blitz.

Danny Federici in Indianapolis on March 20. After some disappointingly uneven performances, the tour turned a corner in Seattle on March 29 when the band conducted a pre-show soundcheck rehearsal for the first time on the leg, sparking a well-received run of west coast shows. Bruce kept each show unique as the final 18 shows of the leg each had a different opening song.

Danny Federici passed away on April 17, leading to the rescheduling of three Florida shows. When the band returned to the stage in Tampa on April 22, they played an emotional set clearly crafted to recall Danny's place in the band. The first seven shows after Danny's death featured a video tribute set to "Blood Brothers" and at least one song from Bruce's first two albums, with Bruce eulogizing Danny with humorous stories of their days on the road together [see pages 54-55].

An extended run through European stadiums followed, during which the collection and playing of sign requests became the central feature of the show. The tour wrapped up in late July and August, first with stadium shows in New Jersey and outside Boston, followed by a quick run of seven performances in U.S. markets the tour had yet to hit. A much longer U.S. leg had been planned for the early fall but was scrapped, leaving Kansas City as a peculiar choice for closing night on August 24, 2008, followed by a special appearance at the Harley-Davidson anniversary festival a week later. Fans say these shows were some of the best of the tour, with sets regularly stretching over three hours and numerous classic covers resurrected from E Street's past. The tour peaked on the penultimate night with a now-legendary St. Louis show that was arguably one of the finest E Street shows of the decade. 🍷

## GENERAL STATISTICS

Shows:	100
US/Canada Shows:	64
European Shows:	36
2007 shows:	37
2008 shows:	63
Songs played:	142
Songs played fewer than 3 times:	51
Fewest songs (Chicago, 10/22/07):	22
Most songs (Helsinki, 7/11/08 and Milwaukee, 8/30/08):	31
Average songs per show, 2007:	23.49
Average songs per show, 2008:	26.21
Songs from <i>Magic</i> performed at 65% or more of shows:	8
Songs from <i>Magic</i> on opening night, Hartford:	8
Songs from <i>Magic</i> on closing night, Kansas City:	5

## NEW TO THE E STREET BAND

Always a Friend*	Last to Die*
American Land	Livin' in the Future*
Born to Be Wild	Long Walk Home
Boys*	Magic*
Buffalo Gals	Mr. Tambourine Man*
Devil's Arcade*	None But the Brave
Devils & Dust	Radio Nowhere*
Girls in Their Summer Clothes*	Ricky Wants a Man of Her Own*
Gypsy Biker*	Terry's Song
I'll Fly Away	Town Called Heartbreak*
I'll Work For Your Love*	Turn! Turn! Turn!
It's All Over Now	You'll Be Coming Down*
Keep the Car Running*	Your Own Worst Enemy*

\* Never before performed by Bruce



## SHOW OPENERS

Radio Nowhere	36
Night	12
Out in the Street	7
No Surrender	6
Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out	5
Summertime Blues	4
The Promised Land	2
So Young and In Love	2
The Ties That Bind	2
Two Hearts	2
Adam Raised a Cain	1
Atlantic City	1
Backstreets	1
Blood Brothers	1
Born in the U.S.A.	1
Cadillac Ranch	1
Darlington County	1
Double Shot (of My Baby's Love)	1
From Small Things...	1
Gypsy Biker	1
Light of Day	1
Loose Ends	1
Jackson Cage	1
Reason to Believe	1
Ricky Wants a Man of Her Own	1
Roulette	1
Spirit in the Night	1
Souls of the Departed	1
Then She Kissed Me	1
Thunder Road	1
Trapped	1
Tunnel of Love	1

## SHOW CLOSERS

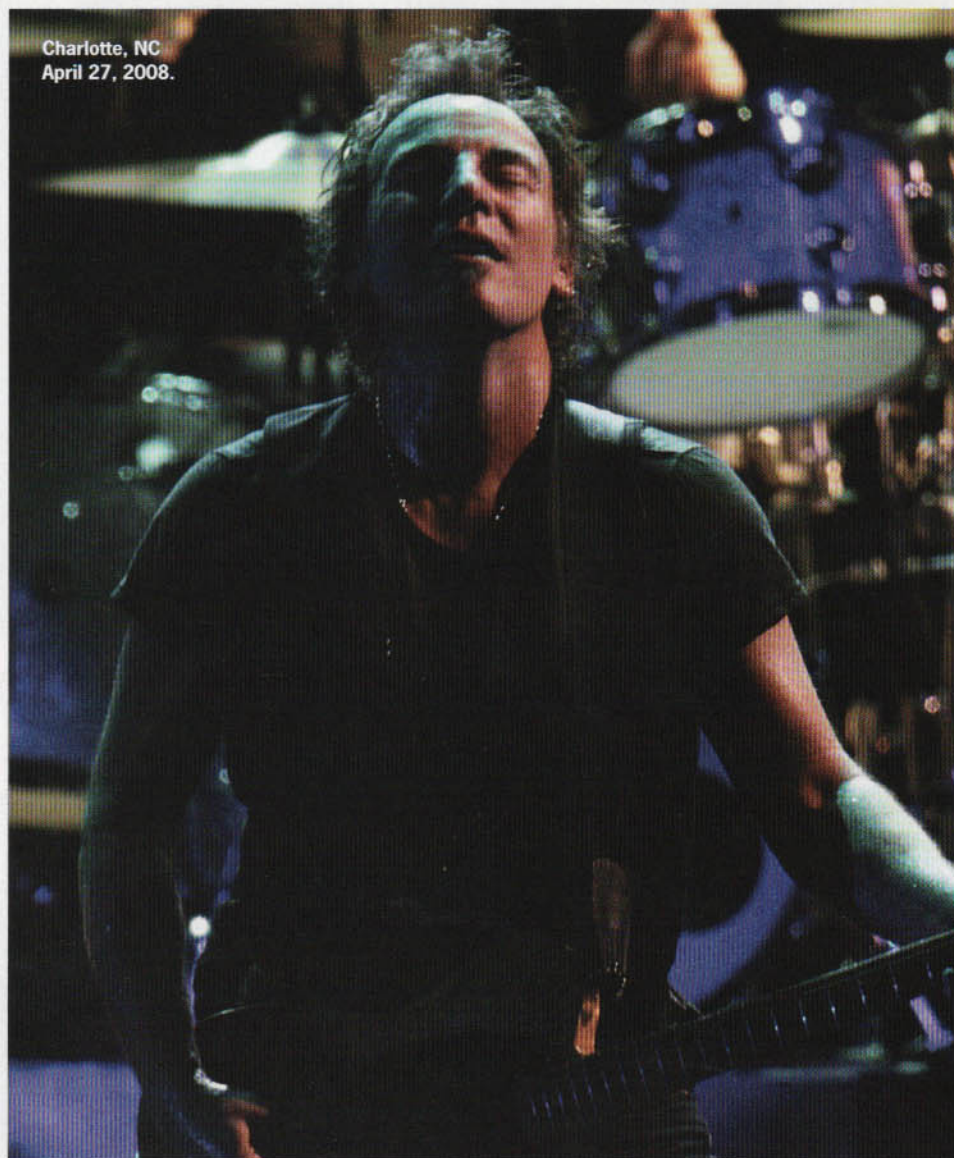
American Land	72
Twist and Shout	12
Santa Claus is Comin' to Town	5
Kitty's Back	3
Rosalita (Come Out Tonight)	3
Born to Be Wild	1
Dancing in the Dark	1
Gloria	1
Glory Days	1
Rockin' All Over the World	1

## PRODIGAL SONS Songs Returning after a Long Absence

Song	Magic Tour Debut	Time since last ESB Performance
Don't Look Back	Greensboro, 4/28/08	7 years, 9 months, 29 days
I Wanna Be With You	Ft. Lauderdale, 5/2/08	8 years, 9 months, 5 days
Little Latin Lupe Lu	Foxboro, 8/2/08	13 years, 5 months, 13 days
Boom Boom*	Hershey, 8/19/08	20 years, 15 days
Part Man Part Monkey*	Hershey, 8/19/08	20 years, 1 month, 24 days
Rockin' All Over the World*	Kansas City, 8/24/08	22 years, 10 months, 22 days
Wooly Bully*	Milwaukee, 8/30/08	23 years, 5 months, 2 days
Double Shot (of My Baby's Love)	Charleston, 8/16/08	26 years, 6 months, 21 days
Drive All Night*	Gothenburg, 7/5/08	26 years 9 months, 24 days
Summertime Blues*	Amsterdam, 6/18/08	26 years, 9 months, 26 days
Held Up Without a Gun	Hamburg, 6/21/09	27 years, 6 months, 21 days
Crush on You	Richmond, 8/18/08	27 years, 8 months, 2 days
Good Rockin' Tonight	Nashville, 8/21/08	27 years, 10 months, 24 days
You Can't Sit Down*	Jacksonville, 8/15/08	29 years, 8 months, 7 days
Mountain of Love	St. Louis, 8/23/08	32 years, 8 months, 23 days
Save the Last Dance for Me*	Kansas City, 8/24/08	32 years, 11 months, 12 days
Then She Kissed Me	St. Louis, 8/23/08	33 years

\*Played by Bruce (sans E Street) in interim period

Charlotte, NC  
April 27, 2008.



GUY ACETO PHOTO



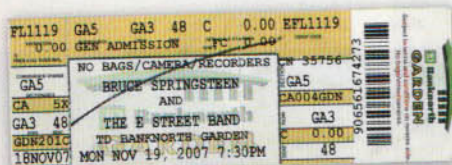


# MAGIC TOUR TOP TEN RECORDINGS

By FLYNN McLEAN

**October 18, 2007**  
**NEW YORK, NY**

The first two-and-a-half weeks of the Magic tour featured six shows within 100 miles of each other, and by the last of those, at Madison Square Garden, the band had found their road legs. Throw in the tour debuts of "Meeting Across the River" and "Jungleland" and you've got a keeper. An excellent recording was released by Crystal Cat under the title *New York City Magic Second Night*.



**November 19, 2007**  
**BOSTON, MA**

The final show of the U.S. leg of the Magic tour was also the last full show featuring Danny Federici. His condition had yet to be announced, and concertgoers were unaware that he'd be taking a leave of absence. Though unspoken, it became clear that this night's powerful performance was all about Danny, and the emotion on the stage was felt throughout the TD Banknorth Garden. The climatic verse of "This Hard Land" alone is enough to put a lump in your throat. The Ev2 and Godfather releases are equal in quality.

**November 28, 2007**  
**MILAN, ITALY**

Italian audiences are famous for their passion, singing, and overall enthusiasm, which always push Bruce to another level. The Datchforum crowd was no exception, and Bruce brought out some serious setlist nuggets: "Incident on 57th Street" and "E Street Shuffle," plus three songs from *Born to Run* in the encores. Nine songs from the new album, however, ensures this one isn't a nostalgia-fest. One of the best represented in terms of fan-based recordings with six, Crystal Cat's *Milano Magic Night* [see page 95] is the best of the bunch.

**March 17, 2008**  
**MILWAUKEE, WI**

Going back to a certain hotel bar in 1975, Bruce has always had a special relationship with Milwaukee, and the 2008 Bradley Center show continued that relationship. The perfor-

mance was up there with the best from the early 2008 leg, especially that intense middle section of "Reason to Believe"/"Saint in the City"/"Prove It All Night." "Streets of Fire" and "Loose Ends" made surprise appearances. In the encores, Richard Davis, the original bassist on the studio recording of "Meeting Across the River," joined the band on stage for the song. Slowburn's dynamic and close recording captures this show beautifully.

**April 5, 2008**  
**SAN JOSE, CA**

A wireless source, the only one from the Magic tour, was mixed skillfully with an already-excellent audience recording to give us the best recording of the tour from the HP Pavilion. You'll hear things you won't normally hear in an audience recording, yet it still retains a very "live" feel thanks to the audience source. Setlist wasn't a clunker, either, with "Fire," "Incident on 57th Street," "Something in the Night," and "Detroit Medley."

**April 14, 2008**  
**HOUSTON, TX**

This show and recording, courtesy of Prof Peabody, has been overlooked by many, but it should be on everyone's list because of the excellent sound quality and a unique setlist featuring a geographically-appropriate opener "Cadillac Ranch," a rare "Atlantic City," the back-to-back guitar-driven "Because the Night" and "Candy's Room," and "E Street Shuffle." "Terry's Song" also made its only tour appearance, leading into "Devil's Arcade," giving the latter additional emotional weight.

**April 22, 2008**  
**TAMPA, FL**

We've talked about emotional and significant shows over the course of Bruce's career, but this night at the St. Pete Times Forum jumps to the top of the list. The first show after the passing of Danny Federici, and only one day after his funeral, featured a set list that can only be described as an "E Street Retrospective," with each album from the E Street eras represented. The opening "Backstreets" plus "Sandy" and "Racing" showed just how much of an impact Danny had on the sound of the band and, more importantly, how much he'll be missed. This show is available on Crystal Cat's *Phantom Night for Danny in Tampa* [see page 55], which used Baker's original recording as the source.

**July 5, 2008**  
**GOTHENBERG, SWEDEN**

Crystal Cat's *Gothenburg Second Magic Night* is the best audience recording from the tour. Taken from the second of two nights at Ullevi Stadium, which basically turned Bruce's weekend shows into a city holiday, this is an in-your-face recording with very little intrusive audience noise. And the performance and setlist more than live up to the sound quality, with "Roulette," "Summertime Blues," "Janey Don't You Lose Heart," and a little ditty called "Drive All Night"—plus, of course, the nearly stadium-breaking "Twist and Shout" to close the show.

**July 31, 2008**  
**EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ**

The final night of the 2008 "Super Bowl of Springsteen" proved that Bruce can still rock Giants Stadium like nobody else, opening with a hot "Summertime Blues" and not letting off the gas for nearly the next three hours, until after a rousing "Rosalita" left the crowd gasping for breath. In between, Bruce went old school with "Blinded by the Light," "Incident on 57th Street," "Spirit in the Night," and a gorgeous "Pretty Flamingo" in its only tour performance. Of the four available recordings, Travitz's recording done with high-end Schoeps mics is the one to get, although the JB/Ev2 and the Bossman versions aren't far behind.

**August 23, 2008**  
**ST. LOUIS, MO**

What else can really be said about what many consider the best of the tour, maybe even best show of the decade? The opening "Then She Kissed Me" was just the tip of the iceberg, with four more classic covers ("Mountain of Love," "Little Queenie," "Detroit Medley," and "Twist and Shout") following suit over the next three hours and 15 minutes at the Scottrade Center. Bruce even threw a little "Not Fade Away" intro into "She's the One." And lest you think it's just covers that made this one special, consider Springsteen pulled out *three* of his own epics: "Backstreets," "Drive All Night," and "Jungleland." Rockers? How 'bout "Rendezvous," "Adam Raised a Cain," and a guitar-driven "Cover Me"? And a nine-song encore, including three after "American Land"? Run, don't walk, to get this one, preferably the "All the Stars Shining" version from Ev2, a remaster of an already-excellent Baker recording. ➔



## MOST COMMON AUDIBLES

Dancing in the Dark	14
Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out	12
Out in the Street	12
No Surrender	11
Backstreets	10
Prove It All Night	10
Twist and Shout	10
Waiting on a Sunny Day	10
Cadillac Ranch	9
Darkness on the Edge of Town	9
Glory Days	9

## MOST COMMONLY SKIPPED

Girls in their Summer Clothes	17
Candy's Room	15
Darlington County	14
Thunder Road	13
Waiting on a Sunny Day	12
Kitty's Back	11
Racing in the Street	11
Working on the Highway	11

Orlando, FL  
April 23, 2008.





# THE HARBINGER

## Count Basie Theatre, May 7, 2008

By CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS

Photographs by JOSEPH QUEVER

**A**h, those words from Bruce Springsteen you just love to hear: "We decided to try to do something tonight that we've never done before, and that you're not going to see someplace else." And on May 7, 2008, he wasn't just talking about a song, but a whole show.

There was a great deal about the night that was unique. In the midst of a huge world tour for *Magic*, readying for the leap from arenas to stadiums, Bruce and the E Street Band throttled down to a comparatively tiny theater for a night, the Count Basie in Red Bank, New Jersey. Formerly known as the Monmouth Arts Center, the place had hosted the E Streeters in the '70s, but they've long since outgrown it. There was novelty just in seeing the behemoth that is a modern-day E Street Band concert compressed into a 1,500-seater—from the "nosebleeds" still being only a stone's throw from the stage, to the band packed together like the old days. When Nils began his whirling dervish routine, it was touch-and-go whether he'd bash right into Clarence—there was practically nowhere else to go. (For the record, the night was collision-free.)

The one-off performance was a benefit, raising more than a million dollars for the Count Basie. Essentially Springsteen's hometown theater, it was greatly in need of renovations. Patti Scialfa, who spoke to the crowd before the show, was honorary co-chair of the Basie's capital campaign, and she made the night happen. As Bruce said later, "I knew I was in trouble when I came home and Patti said, 'Guess where you're going?'"

NBC's Brian Williams—like fellow traveler Jon Stewart, a fan, a New Jerseyan, and seemingly a new pal—introduced Bruce and the Band, reciting his way-back Stone Pony and Tradewinds credentials, and clearly moved by the honor. He pointed out the netting on the ceiling of the 80-year-old venue: "The netting is just to keep the larger pieces of debris from falling down. And if there's an entity that could cause the big ones to fall, it's this group here.... Ladies and gentlemen, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band!"

All of this made the evening a unique one. But what Bruce was talking about was truly a maiden voyage: live performances of complete albums, start to finish, for the very first time. Rumors flew before the show that Springsteen had something like this up his sleeve, with *Born to Run*, *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, and *Born in the U.S.A.* up for consideration; the two '70s albums won out, and he and the band tackled them both, in sequence.

"This was our third record, kind of our do-or-die-record," Bruce said of 1975's *Born to*



*Run*. "They wanted to throw us off the label, Columbia Records, at the time. We were in bad need of something happening. The title cut, 'Born to Run,' I spent about six months writing, and then spent an obscene amount of time recording, trying to figure out a template for what was going to work. After that, I spent the rest of the time trying to put together some songs that I thought were as good as that one!" A full horn section blared on "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," with Mark Pender returning for the trumpet spotlight on "Meeting Across the River."

Of *Darkness*, which was actually performed first on this night, Springsteen said, "I wrote this record in 1977. Lived out in Holmdel on a farm, [I was going through] a lot of tough times myself, probably cut somewhere upward of 70 songs, and these ten songs were the ones that made it.... Here we go, get ready!" A commiserating laugh soon went through the crowd as the band had to stop almost before they started, having bobbled the beginning of "Badlands." "We fucked it up already!" laughed Bruce. "I knew there was a reason why we didn't do this!" But from there on it was a non-stop, track-for-track, out-on-the-wire revisiting of the passion and the power of these classic records.

"Something we've never done before"? Absolutely. "Something you're not gonna see anywhere else"? That's where things got interesting, in terms of E Street Band Future. Because while that's still true—Bruce and the band had never before and have never since performed two full albums at a concert—the night went so well that it inspired one of the most exciting twists for the Working on a Dream to

come the following year: the fall 2009 leg featured full sequential performances of not only *Born to Run* and *Darkness*, but also every other E Street Band album through *Born in the U.S.A.* And you can trace it all back to the Count Basie Experiment on this night in May.

"That's the first time we've done it," Clarence told *Backstreets*, "And it was pretty exciting to bring an album to life like that, how it was planned, and hear it all at once, live."

And performing "Born to Run" in the middle of a set? "You get it in your mind that it's time to go home, you know?" Clarence laughs. "Wait a minute..."

"That was a fabulous night," says Nils. "It was a wild night—I really didn't realize what we were doing until practically the last minute! Bruce decided the day of the show—actually, Steve suggested doing the *Darkness* record first, and then doing *Born to Run*, just because the *Darkness* album has a lot of dark subject matter." As Bruce put it at the beginning of the show, "We're gonna start with *Darkness*, so we don't send you home suicidal!"

They needn't have worried. The evening's thrills—hearing Bruce and the band bring two of their masterworks to life, putting those songs back in their original context, watching them wrestle with sequences they've never revisited—more than compensated for any gloom. And after the full album performances, the encore was an uplifting '70s-style blowout recalling the band's Monmouth Arts Center heyday. The "Mighty Max Horns" returned for BTR outtake "So Young and in Love," "Kitty's Back," "Rosalita" and a surprise "Raise Your Hand." No one had to be told twice. 🎸



# COUNT OFF

## Max Weinberg on the Basie show

### Backstreets: So what it was like to play those two records in full, back-to-back?

**Max Weinberg:** That was just an incomparable experience. I did the Conan show, so I had to come late, and no soundcheck or anything, so I didn't know what to expect. As it turned out it sounded great on the stage.

But right before we went into "Badlands," Bruce came back to the drums. He said, 'I'll do a double count-off.' Which is like a *one, two, one, two*, right? And we never do that on "Badlands"—it's always just right into the song. For me, Bruce counts off almost every song. I'll give him the tempo, then he'll go *one, two, three, four* or *one, two*, or whatever.

### Kind of legendarily so, right.

Exactly. So "Badlands," to me, it doesn't start with [sings riff] *dah, da-da-dah, da-da-dah...* That's not the downbeat. The downbeat is the countoff: *one, two. One* is the downbeat. I'm three, four.

So he went *one, two, one, two*—and I knew I had to do a two-beat fill, but for the life of me I couldn't think of what to do, so I didn't do the "Badlands" fill. I did a different two beat fill. I did what my band calls a Motown pick-up. *One, two, bump, ba-da-bump-bump*. So it's still two-beat, it's still two quarter notes, but it's not *ba-ba-bump-bump, ba-ba-bump*.

So when I did that—everybody didn't know where they were, because I didn't do the fill I normally do, and he didn't do the count he normally does. For me, the whole entity is the whole song including the count-off. So, it wasn't like we weren't paying attention, but since the count-off was different, I just played a different fill, which threw everybody else off because... what comes next?

So that was really funny. But the concert itself, we got about ten minutes into it, and it was a remarkable experience. Because we'd never done that, played the entirety of an album—it was really like playing chamber music. The songs took on a whole other feel being played sequentially.

### When you say it was like playing chamber music, what exactly do you mean?

It was almost like playing someone else's music. In other words... Jimmy Vivino plays in this great band the Fab Faux, and they do Beatles music. They're really good at it, and they approach it very seriously. That's chamber music, as when you play Mozart string pieces, for four or five strings. It's prescribed music, and it's older. You haven't done it that way before, so it's a bit academic. I don't mean academic in the sense of less than a full blown-out performance, but it felt new. It felt like new material.

### Context is everything, in a lot of ways.

That's what it is. It's the context. We'd never played the whole thing in a row. So it had a cumulative effect on all of us, including, I think, the audience. And it felt totally fresh. I mean, I didn't write those songs, I can't tell you how that felt, but I can tell you in terms of playing the music... I had worked all day, and I got to work really early, and on the way down I was falling asleep. But I was just so energized by three or four songs in, I could have played all night. I had an absolute blast.

### I was surprised to speak to a friend of mine after the show who was disappointed. I said, "Disappointed? How could you be disappointed?" He said, "Well, we've heard all those songs recently. It was just the sequencing that was different." I said, "Just the sequencing? That was the point!"

That was the point—because then you're listening to an album. And an album is not just a collection of singles; with *Sgt. Pepper*, really, an album became its own entity. So when you listen to eight or nine songs, they should add up to something bigger than each song individually.

In one of our concerts in those days, we never played all of the songs like that. And some of the arrangements were the ones that have evolved through the years into stage arrangements.

### That made it interesting, too. Like getting Nils' solo at the end of "Prove It All Night." You were recreating the albums in a way, but the way that they've evolved with the band over time.

Just today I heard "Streets of Fire" on Sirius radio. It was a live version from 1978—I listened to it and I said, "I don't play that song at all that way anymore." I do play some of those things, but there are certain things I was doing then that I don't do at all. I was kind of shocked, because we haven't really played that song very much, but even that evolved into something else.

### Considering how much tends to change, and thinking back to the beginning of "Badlands," I'm surprised that snafus don't happen more often.

That's how good the band is. As a bandleader, I can tell you it's not only rare. It just doesn't exist anywhere else, in anybody. And in the Count Basie, what you have is Bruce in a club. That was a club. "Raise Your Hand" was a total audible—we hadn't played that in a long time, and it all comes back.

### With the horns and everything!

Well, the other thing with Bruce is that if it's not a challenge, my sense is that he's not really into it. He's gotta have a challenge—and he challenges himself. He's not up there to just give you a concert. He's up there to give you your life, his life, our life, and the best of it. And that's a big part of it, that he has the freedom to be able to go and pick a song we haven't played. We may not all start off the same, but we're going to get on the same track pretty quick. 🐼

—interview by Christopher Phillips







# LOOKIN' FOR A SIGN

By GLENN RADECKI

**A**lthough fan requests have been a central element of Springsteen shows on the Magic and Working on a Dream tours, Bruce Springsteen hasn't always embraced signs held aloft by audience members. On July 29, 1999 at the Meadowlands, after Bruce finished up "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" he responded to his audience and in particular those in the crowd holding up signs for "Rosalita." The rebuke: "put them fucking signs down, I've got a job to do." When Bruce finally did choose to play "Rosalita," as the final song of that 15-night stand, he noted (perhaps only half-jokingly) that "I haven't seen any of those stupid signs."

Quite a bit has changed since then.

His disappointment during the 1999 Jersey stand notwithstanding, Bruce was occasionally taking requests-via-sign during the Reunion tour, often when he and a fan were thinking along the same lines. "Back in Your Arms" came out in Louisville, Kentucky in April of 2000 with Bruce noting that he had "a few requests for this one." Not only was there a large banner in the crowd, but Springsteen had

practiced the song in that afternoon's sound-check as well (although it did not make it to his handwritten list of songs he planned to play that night).

Bruce always varies his live set, but twice in the post-Reunion era, he has truly opened up all corners of his back catalog while on tour: the final leg of the Rising tour, which saw more material from 1987-1995 played than at any other time to date, and the second half of the Devils & Dust tour. Tellingly, both of these occasions included runs of ten or more consecutive shows each with a different tour premiere. Not coincidentally, a notable uptick in requests happened at the same time, with a plethora of signs in the stadium crowds at the end of the Rising tour and fans delivering their requests to Bruce in person during the Devils & Dust tour. Particularly on the latter tour, Bruce's marked accessibility indicated a certain acceptance of the fan-request process and perhaps tacit approval itself.

The number of signs and requests dropped at the beginning of the Magic tour, but things changed, appropriately, with the tour premiere of "Rosalita" in Rochester, NY on March 6, 2008. Not only did Bruce grant the request,

he also took the sign from the audience and propped it up against the bottom of his microphone stand for all to see. Soon, Bruce was plucking multiple signs out of the crowd, even directing certain signs out of his reach to be passed up to the stage. When the Magic tour traveled to Europe, Bruce would take time to pass in front of the stage to collect signs from the crowd, put them in a pile next to the drum riser, and then pick certain songs to be played; eventually, the exercise became part of the shtick of the show, as Bruce would call for Max to "gimme a beat!" as Bruce would offer commentary on the night's offering ("We don't know that one," or "Ooh, that's a good one!").

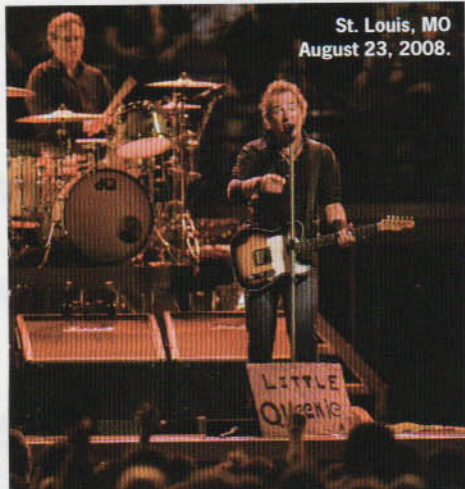
Despite the theatrics, Bruce maintained a certain control over the entire process, not only by what signs he chose to take (signs for "New York City Serenade" and "The Price You Pay"—of which there were many—rarely made it on stage) but also by frequently granting requests for songs that were already on the handwritten setlist and that he presumably intended to play anyway. On certain occasions, Bruce's setlist included an "options list," suggesting there were certain songs Bruce was looking for signs for. After "Drive All Night" had its first



St. Louis, MO  
August 16, 2008.



St. Louis, MO  
August 23, 2008.



Torino, Italy  
July 21, 2009.



full-band performance since 1981 in Sweden, the song was performed two more times, with both performances preceded by Bruce displaying a sign requesting the song. On both occasions, however, the song was already on the setlist; in fact, the song appeared on the setlist on four additional occasions yet went unplayed each time, suggesting that perhaps Bruce was unable to find a sign for it in the crowd.

Most fan requests were for Bruce's own songs. But on June 18, 2008 in Amsterdam, Bruce granted a request for "Summertime Blues," last played by the band on the River tour, starting a trend that saw "You Can't Sit Down," "Good Rockin' Tonight," and "Mountain of Love" return to the E Street stage for the first time in years. As Bruce noted in St. Louis before playing the last of these, "Since we started to do some of these requests, people have been getting sassy... very, very sassy... and they try to stump us with things that we played 25, 30 years ago. But the elephant never forgets!"

**T**he signs quickly established themselves as a regular feature of the 2009 Working on a Dream tour. Within the first few shows, Bruce was leaving places open in the setlist each night for audience requests. In Los Angeles, during the first of two April concerts, Bruce cued Max to start "Working on the Highway" and collected signs as the drum beat continued; after retrieving a "Raise Your Hand" sign, Bruce decided to challenge the band instead. "Raise Your Hand" was back the next night, quickly cemented as the sign-hunting song. When the tour moved on to Boston, Bruce took on "I Wanna Be Sedated" for the first time, and the Stump the Band feature was born. The E Streeters were soon tackling songs on a regular basis that they'd never even rehearsed before, let alone played live. After successfully granting requests such as "London Calling" or "Wild Thing," Springsteen frequently reminded the audience, "You can't stump the E Street Band!"

Bruce and the band clearly enjoyed this part of the show, so much that he took several setlist cues from signs he had received—songs such as "Good Lovin'," "Mony Mony," and "Higher and Higher" reappeared several times after

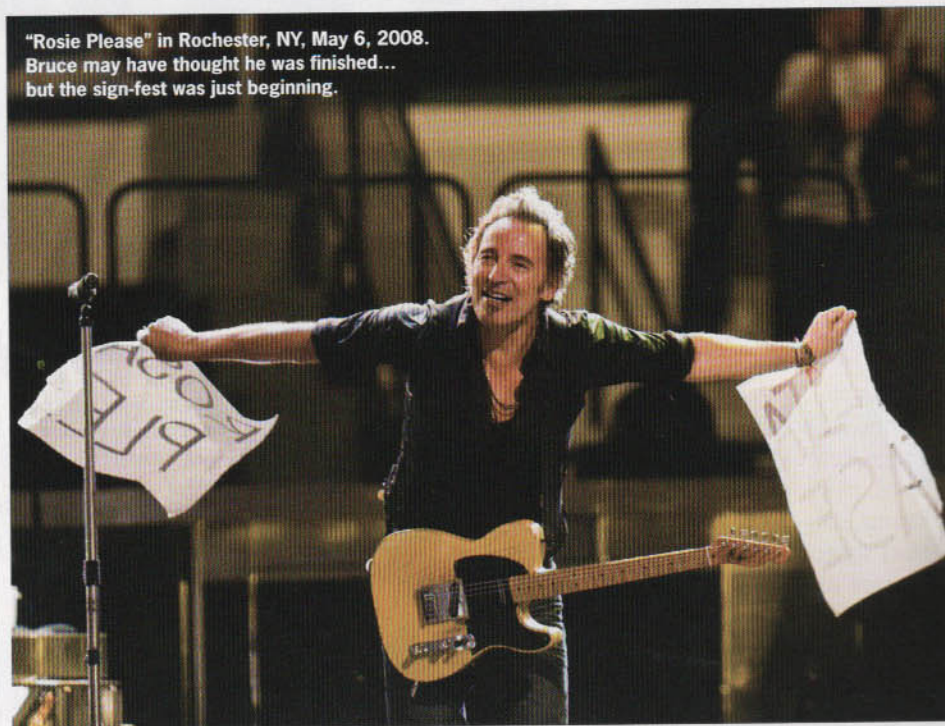
initial requests. Most notably, after its debut in Philadelphia on October 20, 2009, "Higher and Higher" was installed in the set as a truly unforgettable show-closer for the final ten shows of the tour.

With so many different requests being coming at them, Bruce and the band even began practicing certain songs at their pre-show soundchecks in anticipation of what was to come. At the Nassau Coliseum on May 4, 2009, the band not only rehearsed the Soul Survivors' "Expressway to Your Heart" (Bruce noted during the show that he "had a feeling somebody was going to request this") but also several other cover songs that never got a public airing during the tour. That the performance of "Like a Rolling Stone" in Pittsburgh on May 18, 2009 was one of the biggest highlights of the first leg of the tour was in part due to the fact that the band had been working on the song since the Chicago show one week earlier.

At times during the Working on a Dream tour, it seemed as if the request segment

became too much the central part of the show, particularly when sign requests would outnumber songs from Bruce's most recent album. Come the end of the tour, Bruce seemed to tire of the request segment himself, occasionally reducing it to but one or two requests per show, as the performances of albums became the more important aspect of the show. Further, with "Raise Your Hand" absent from the set on several nights, many audience members forgot their manners and held up their signs for the majority of the show. Unfortunately, the message posted on [bruce.springsteen.net](http://bruce.springsteen.net) reminding fans to "please show respect for those in the crowd whose views of the stage may be blocked by your signs by keeping them to a reasonable size and displaying them for only short periods of time" was frequently ignored. Regardless, it is undisputed that the sign requests over the past two tours provided an abundance of high points, both for those who had the requests granted and those who were lucky enough to witness those performances. 🐘

"Rosie Please" in Rochester, NY, May 6, 2008.  
Bruce may have thought he was finished...  
but the sign-fest was just beginning.



A.M. SADDLER PHOTO



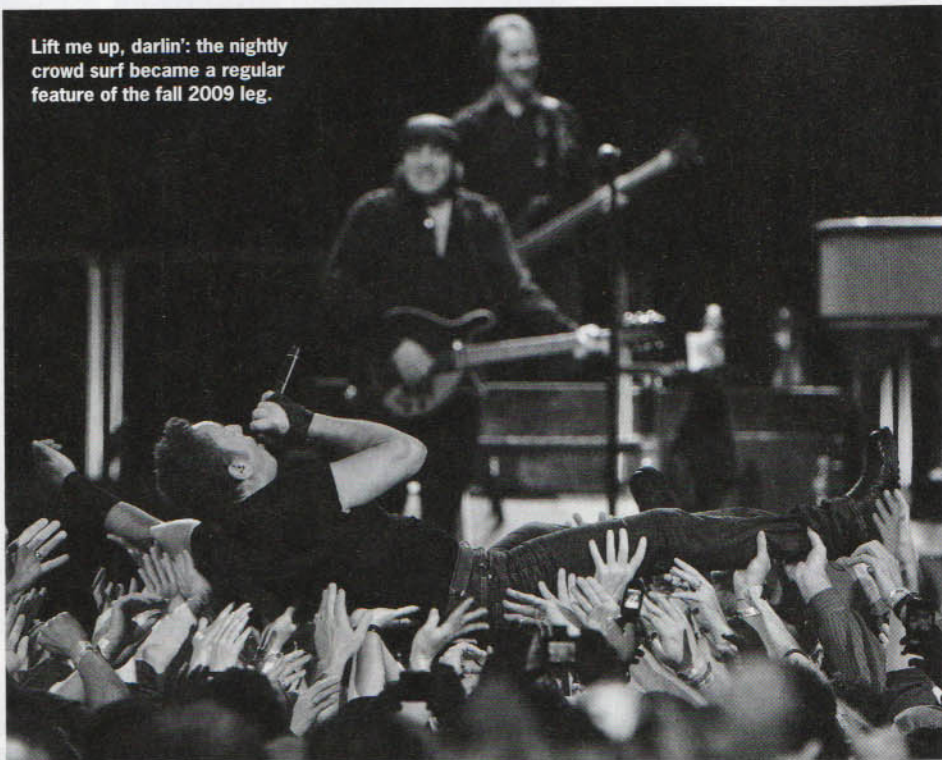
# WORKING ON A DREAM TOUR

April - November 2009

**L**ess than seven months after finishing up the Magic tour, the Working on a Dream tour began on April 1, 2009 in San Jose, CA. Opening night featured six new songs; the second night had five, and the show was quickly established with two to four *Working on a Dream* songs as the standard allotment. Curiously, not only were the new songs missing but almost nothing from the *Magic* album made the set either. Instead of new material, a three-song set, usually consisting of "Seeds" plus rock versions of "Johnny 99" and "The Ghost of Tom Joad" (or alternate "Youngstown") formed a powerful statement regarding the perilous economic times in America. A gospel-influenced cover of "Hard Times Come Again No More" regularly opened the encore.

Signs were back in force for this tour, and a request segment soon became a highlight of the middle of the show as Bruce would collect signs during "Raise Your Hand," then play three or four of the audience picks before starting the back half of the concert. Granted requests included rarely performed Springsteen numbers—"The E Street Shuffle" and "I'm Goin' Down" were popular choices—as well as covers resurrected from the band's past, including "The Last Time" and an energetic "(I Don't Wanna) Hang Up My Rock and Roll Shoes" on closing night in Buffalo. New to the tour, however, was the granting of requests for songs the band had never before played. This "Stump the Band" feature, as Bruce laughingly called it, allowed the audience a chance to watch the band discuss how to approach the song, perform it, and then have Bruce declare that the band could not be stumped! Highlights of this

Lift me up, darlin': the nightly crowd surf became a regular feature of the fall 2009 leg.



A.M. SADDLER PHOTO

process included Elvis Presley's "Burning Love" and a one-time-only "Like a Rolling Stone."

Notably, the tour featured an expanded band: Cindy Mizelle and Curtis King, who had toured in the Seeger Sessions band, joined to sing backing vocals, presumably in particular for the harmonies on the new material that wound up getting ignored. Although featured on the

encore-opening cover of "Hard Times," they were mostly under-utilized during the tour. When Max Weinberg's late-night television gig conflicted with his E Street duties, the solution was to keep the drummer's seat in the family. Jay Weinberg took over the drums for 12 shows, in addition to extensive on-stage rehearsal time during the spring U.S. leg. Opinions regarding

Jay's performance were decidedly mixed: many fans enjoyed the energy he brought to the stage, with the drum break in "Radio Nowhere" a particular highlight; others decried his lack of experience and noted shortcomings in subtlety and tempo. Ultimately, the situation was resolved when Max took a two-month leave of absence from the *Tonight Show* so that he could be present for the balance of the tour. Joining the band for the final run of shows was trumpeter Curt Ramm, added for performances of the *Born to Run* album but staying to expand the band's range, particularly on the newfound "Higher and Higher" show-closer.

Shortly after the announcement of the final U.S. dates of the tour, word circulated that the Chicago show on September 20 would feature a performance of the *Born to Run* album in its entirety, an idea that had been mentioned in pre-tour publicity as a possibility for the tour. Following the well-received Chicago show, announcements slowly trickled out that each remaining show on the tour would feature the performance of an album. Over the nine shows at Giants Stadium and the Philadelphia Spectrum, fans heard *Born to Run* four times, and enjoyed two performances of *Darkness on*

## GENERAL STATISTICS

Shows:	83
US/Canada Shows:	57
European Shows:	26
Songs played:	190
Songs played fewer than 3 times:	89
Fewest songs: (4 different shows)	24
Most songs (Buffalo, 11/22/09):	34
Average songs per show:	27.23
Songs from WOAD performed at 65% or more of shows:	2
Songs from <i>Magic</i> performed at 65% of more of shows:	0
Songs from WOAD on opening night, San Jose:	6
Songs from WOAD on closing night, Buffalo:	2



## NEW TO THE E STREET BAND

All or Nothin' At All  
All Shook Up\*  
The Angel  
Bad Luck\*  
Brown Eyed Girl  
Burning Love  
Coma Girl\*  
Da Doo Ron Ron\*  
The Dark End of the Street\*  
Expressway to Your Heart\*  
Good Eye\*  
Good Lovin'\*  
Green Onions\*  
Hard Times\*  
I Wanna Be Sedated\*  
Jailhouse Rock  
Kingdom of Days\*  
Like a Rolling Stone\*  
Little Bit O'Soul\*  
London Calling  
Mony Mony  
My Generation  
My Lucky Day\*  
Outlaw Pete\*  
Pretty Woman  
Queen of the Supermarket\*  
Ramblin' Gamblin' Man  
Restless Nights\*  
Rockin' Robin\*  
(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction  
Seventh Son\*  
Surprise Surprise\*  
This Life\*  
The Wanderer  
What Love Can Do\*  
Wild Thing\*  
Wrecking Ball\*  
The Wrestler\*  
You Really Got Me

\* **Never before**  
**performed by Bruce**

## SHOW OPENERS

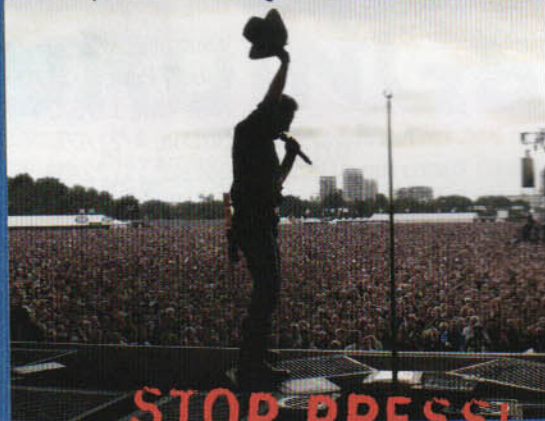
Badlands	43
Wrecking Ball	12
No Surrender	3
Jackson Cage	2
Seeds	2
Sherry Darling	2
Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out	2
Thundercrack	2
Who'll Stop the Rain	2
Cadillac Ranch	1
Coma Girl	1
Downbound Train	1
London Calling	1
Loose Ends	1
Night	1
Outlaw Pete	1
The Price You Pay	1
Prove It All Night	1
Seaside Bar Song	1
The Ties That Bind	1
When You Walk in the Room	1
Working on the Highway	1

## SHOW CLOSERS

Twist and Shout	19
Rosalita	17
Dancing in the Dark	12
Glory Days	8
Higher and Higher	7
Thunder Road	4
Detroit Medley	2
Hungry Heart	2
Mony Mony	2
Rockin' All Over the World	2
American Land	1
Bobby Jean	1
Born in the U.S.A.	1
Jersey Girl	1
Kitty's Back	1
Seven Nights to Rock	1
Wooly Bully	1
You Can't Sit Down	1

## BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND

*London Calling Live in Hyde Park*



**STOP PRESS!**

**FROM HYDE PARK TO YOUR LIVING ROOM**  
**WOAD home video set for June 22**

**L**ess than a year after the June 28, 2009 "Hard Rock Calling" festival in London, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band's performance there will see release as *London Calling: Live in Hyde Park*. The concert film, which runs more than two-and-a-half-hours and is Springsteen's first in an outdoor setting, is due on June 22 from Columbia. The film will be available on one Blu-Ray disc or as a two-DVD set.

The London setlist spans from the *Born to Run* era to *Working on a Dream* and includes rare covers such as The Clash's "London Calling," Jimmy Cliff's "Trapped," The Young Rascals' "Good Lovin'," and Eddie Floyd's "Raise Your Hand." Brian Fallon from The Gaslight Anthem joins the band as a guest vocalist on "No Surrender."

In addition to the festival show, this release adds two bonus clips, both from outdoor concerts on the *Working on a Dream* tour: a steamy "The River" from Glastonbury 2009, and "Wrecking Ball" from Giants Stadium [see page 17]. Producer/editor Thom Zimny and director Chris Hilson oversaw the film, with audio mixed by Bob Clearmountain. 🎧

## MOST COMMON AUDIBLES

Rosalita	18
Because the Night	13
Bobby Jean	13
Thunder Road	13
Twist and Shout	13
Growin' Up	12
Hungry Heart	10
No Surrender	10
Prove It All Night	10
Spirit in the Night	10
Trapped	10

## MOST COMMONLY SKIPPED

Thunder Road	19
Raise Your Hand	18
Bobby Jean	9
Hard Times	9
I'm on Fire	8
Glory Days	7
Hungry Heart	7
No Surrender	7
Radio Nowhere	7
Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out	7



## PRODIGAL SONS Songs Returning after a Long Absence

Song	WOAD Tour Debut	Time since last ESB Performance
Can't Help Falling in Love	New York, 11/8/09	9 years, 4 months, 11 days
The Fever*	Philadelphia, 4/28/09	9 years, 7 months, 4 days
Give the Girl a Kiss	Hershey, 5/15/09	9 years, 9 months, 16 days
Great Balls of Fire	Valladolid, 8/1/09	13 years, 10 months, 29 days
Seeds*	Asbury Park, 3/24/09**	20 years, 8 months, 12 days
Sweet Soul Music*	New York, 11/8/09	21 years, 2 months, 5 days
I'm Bad, I'm Nationwide	Boston, 4/21/09	21 years, 8 months, 12 days
I Don't Wanna Hang Up...	Buffalo, 11/22/09	22 years, 3 months, 13 days
Stolen Car*	New York, 11/8/09	24 years, 1 month, 21 days
Wreck on the Highway*	New York, 11/9/09	24 years, 6 months, 10 days
Jole Blon*	Tampa, 9/12/09	27 years, 11 months, 29 days
I Wanna Marry You*	Philadelphia, 10/19/09	28 years, 1 month, 8 days
Fade Away*	Stockholm, 6/7/09	28 years, 3 months, 2 days
Louie Louie*	Toronto, 5/7/09	28 years, 3 months 11 days
The Price You Pay	Philadelphia, 10/20/09	28 years, 4 months, 3 days
The Last Time*	E. Rutherford, 10/9/09	30 years, 9 months, 8 days
Higher and Higher*	Philadelphia, 10/20/09	32 years, 5 months, 7 days
When You Walk in the Room	Philadelphia, 10/19/09	33 years, 6 months, 11 days
Sha La La	Hartford, 8/19/09	33 years, 7 months, 22 days
You Never Can Tell*	Bilbao, 7/26/09	35 years, 1 month, 23 days
Seaside Bar Song*	Philadelphia, 10/13/09	36 years, 4 months

\*Played by Bruce (sans E Street) in interim period

\*\*Rehearsal show

the Edge of Town and three of Born in the U.S.A. (a fourth Born in the U.S.A. show, scheduled for Kansas City, was cancelled after the sudden death of Bruce's cousin, an assistant tour manager). Closing night of the tour in Buffalo brought Bruce back to where he started, with an airing of *Greetings from Asbury Park, NJ*.

The process by which the albums were announced was irksome to some fans, coming in all but four instances after tickets had gone on sale and with an uneven distribution of albums (the vast majority of shows, even those in close geographic proximity, got *Born to Run*). Much was forgiven, however, as the performances rank with the band's best—even as rumors swirled that the end of the tour could mean the end of the E Street Band. Bruce wasn't having any of that, as he promised the crowd on that final night in Buffalo: "We're gonna say goodbye, but just for a little while... a very little while...."

The tour reached its zenith at Madison Square Garden on a weekend in early November with triumphant, one-off performances of *The Wild*, *The Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* and *The River*. Over those two nights, Bruce delivered superlative showcase performances of many of his greatest compositions that left fans amazed and provided a fitting cap to more than two years of continuous touring with the E Street Band. 🐾



"Can you hear me?"  
Austin, TX  
April 5, 2009.

FRANK CASIMIRO PHOTO



# WOAD TOUR TOP TEN RECORDINGS

By FLYNN McLEAN

**April 16, 2009**  
**LOS ANGELES, CA**

Another outstanding wireless/audience mix recording by Hoserama, the same person who gave us the excellent San Jose recording from 2008. The sound quality is great, and the Stump the Band section included a great "Proud Mary." Another key highlight from this Sports Arena show was Mike Ness from Social Distortion joining the E Street Band for the Social D song "Bad Luck."

**April 28, 2009**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PA**

The first of what turned out to be a total of six nights at the old Spectrum in Philly incorporated both the best elements of the early part of the tour and some choice setlist nuggets. In a tour that didn't include much new material, "The Wrestler" and "Kingdom of Days" were key highlights whenever they were played. Going the other way, "Fire" and "The Fever" honored the band's long history in the storied venue. And you want cool covers with a Philly flavor? How 'bout "Mountain of Love" and "You Can't Sit Down"? As is the case with most shows in the Northeast, and especially Philly, multiple excellent recordings are available for this show, with EdTyre's winning by a nose.

**May 23, 2009**  
**EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ**

The second night of two at the "House That Bruce Built" was possibly the best show from the first leg of the tour. With a strong emphasis on the early material, including three songs from the second album, the hometown crowd ate up every minute of it. The closing double-shot of "Glory Days" and "Mony Mony" really gave this one a house party feel. Track down Scoper's excellent recording to (re-)experience this one.

**June 5, 2009**  
**STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN**

Taking things outside, with the middle night of three at Stockholm Stadion... maybe something about the Swedish air just makes Bruce want to dig a bit deeper. Even though the digging wasn't (surprisingly) done in the Stump the Band section, there was digging: a show-opening "Downbound Train," the rare "My Lucky Day," "Good Lovin'" for the sign collection background music, the always welcome "Lost in the Flood," and an

extended "Land of a Thousand Dances" in the "Detroit Medley." Not to mention some royalty at the checkout counter, as "Queen of the Supermarket" made its one and only tour appearance. Available on Crystal Cat's *Stockholm Second Dream Night*.

**July 5, 2009**  
**VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

A very unusual set list and excellent sound quality easily puts this one on the list. You know the show's going to be different when "Jackson Cage" opens the show and "Jersey Girl" opens the encores. And between those two were "Rendezvous," "Proud Mary," a rare "Sandy," and a triple-shot from *The Rising*. Available on Godfather Records' *Another Carnival by the Danube*.

**July 21, 2009**  
**TORINO, ITALY**

The trio of Italian shows may have been the high point of the European leg—all three nights were serious contenders for this list. And all three are available in excellent sound quality, courtesy of Crystal Cat's *Italian Dream Box*, so it does come down to personal preference for setlists. But the middle show, at Torino's Stadio Olimpico, gets our nod, with the opening "Loose Ends" and the very thematic trio of "Drive All Night," "Two Hearts," and "My Love Will Not Let you Down."

**November 7, 2009**  
**NEW YORK, NY**

For the one and only complete album performance of *The Wild, The Innocent, & the E Street Shuffle*—and just the first of two stunning nights at Madison Square Garden—Bruce brought out all the stops to make it memorable: a horn section for "E Street Shuffle" and "Kitty's Back," a string section for "New York City Serenade," and the segue from "Incident" to "Rosalita" was perfect. Not to mention an opening "Thundercrack" to set the mood for the evening. Even after the album performance was completed, Bruce kept the pedal to the metal with a rare "Bus Stop" and even rarer "Human Touch," plus a special performance of "Glory Days" for the Evil Em... err, New York Yankees. The horns returned for "Higher and Higher," putting this show over the top. There are several excellent recordings available, but the best by a nose is 2007Bruce's remaster of Bossman284's recording, which made the album performance its own disc so that the "Incident"/"Rosalita" segue is preserved.

**November 8, 2009**  
**NEW YORK, NY**

They said it couldn't be done. They said it was too long. They said it would lose the crowd during the slow songs. Well, "they" were wrong, as the complete album performance of *The River* is a candidate for the title of Best of Tour. Bruce and the band nailed everything, including those songs not performed in a couple of decades. And in one of those amazing alignments of stars, the show is represented by another excellent wireless/audience mix, again by Hoserama, so that the recording fully does the performance justice.

**November 10, 2009**  
**CLEVELAND, OH**

It's very rare that three consecutive shows are included in one of these lists, but here we are. Start with the complete performance of one of the greatest albums in the history of rock 'n' roll—and while *Born to Run* was featured at 13 shows, this is the best recording, courtesy of Neo. And once "Jungleland" came to a close, Bruce had some surprises up his sleeve, or at least picked some cool songs for the request section: "Red Headed Woman," "Pink Cadillac," and the most amazing, intense, and passionate performance (ever?) of "Back in Your Arms."


**November 22**  
**BUFFALO, NY**

Longtime readers have undoubtedly noticed that we're suckers for tour finales, and we continue that trend in 2009 with this HSBC Arena show. For the last night, Bruce took it truly old school with a full performance of *Greetings From Asbury Park, NJ* that yielded a surprisingly beautiful rendition of "The Angel" and an extraordinary guitar solo at the end of "Lost in the Flood." But what made this night truly memorable was "Restless Nights," one of those *Tracks* songs that fans had hoped to hear since the start of the Reunion tour nearly 11 years ago. Bruce offered it as a birthday present for Steve—introducing the song, he said it was Steve's "number one favorite song of all time"—but the hardcores in the audience were the true beneficiaries. As Bruce said at song's end, "He might have been right all these years!" Throw in a couple of classic covers—"I Don't Want to Hang up My Rock and Roll Shoes" and "Boom Boom"—and you've got another contender for Best of Tour. Another Bossman284/2007Bruce collaboration provides us with a recording worthy of the show. 🐉









# DANNY BYE BYE

Danny Federici, keyboards and accordion player for Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, died on April 17, 2008 at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City after a three year battle with melanoma, a skin cancer. Just prior to being diagnosed with cancer and during the early part of his illness, I spent a number of days with Danny, conducting interviews with him and planning out what he one day hoped would be his memoirs. Though I had known him for many years, the time spent with him gave me a fresh appreciation of both the man and the musician...

## DANNY FEDERICI 1950 - 2008

### BY ROBERT SANTELLI



**H**is nickname was the Phantom, as if to suggest someone who is seen but not heard, or heard but not seen, someone lurking in the shadows or in the background, or anywhere, for that matter, except for center stage. Well, if

there is one thing that can be said about Danny Federici, the late keyboards player in Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, it is that he certainly was not a rock 'n' roll extrovert. He didn't need much onstage attention. He never really required rock star ego stroking. Once I asked him if he ever thought about becoming more visible in the E Street Band. Danny shrugged. "What for?"

So, Phantom Dan Federici, as Springsteen used to introduce him from the stage, was the one musician in the E Street Band for whom it was all right not to notice. But, the fact is, he was always there. Go all the way back to the mid-'60s and where you found Bruce Springsteen and music, you found the Phantom. He was an original member of the E Street Band, before Bruce was even calling it that. He was in Steel Mill, the legendary late-'60s Jersey Shore band that pumped volumes of hard and heavy rock through the ocean air in Long Branch and at Monmouth College (now University).

He was an Upstage regular, playing until the wee hours of the morning in the Asbury Park club where jamming was how you earned your musical stripes. He was even at the gig that Earth played, the first band that Springsteen actually led as a lad not even out of his teens, the gig where drummer Vini Lopez, with Federici at his side, suggested to Springsteen that the three of them form a new band. The way Vini remembers it, he did most of the talking. Federici was there, like a Phantom. How appropriate.

**P**erhaps it is too much of a cliché to describe the situation this way: Danny Federici let his music do the talking. But it did. Ask Bruce or any E Street Band member about the Phantom and they'll all say that he knew *exactly* what to play. Never showy stuff, just the right stuff. Whether he was behind the organ or with the accordion strapped to him, the Phantom had an

uncanny feel to play precisely what was needed.

The E Street Band, with all its great musicians, has always been a complex music machine. Not only did Danny Federici have to find his place in it, but he also had to make sure that what he played



was in sync with what Roy Bittan, the E Street Band's other keyboardist, played. Usually Danny helped give the music its background beauty, filling in holes or shallow areas with dollops of organ riffs, rich and sweet. However, when he took his solos—if you're a longtime E Street Band fan, you knew just where they'd fall—they always sounded so necessary and so vital. Often you'd get the feeling that if you took them away, the songs they were featured in would simply crumble.

And then, of course, there was the accordion, the instrument that Danny Federici was practically born to play. He was barely out of diapers when his mother—a woman determined, even driven, to make her son a music star—got him his first accordion. He took to it immediately, and Mrs. Federici began fantasizing about how young Danny might one day become a featured star on *The Lawrence Welk Show*, the 1950s program she watched religiously on her small black and white television.

Danny was four years old when he gave his first recital. Some of the old pictures I've seen of Danny back then, you couldn't tell if the accordion was bigger than Danny or Danny barely bigger than the accordion. Oh, but the kid could play. They called him a prodigy back in Flemington, New Jersey where he grew up with the sound of polkas dancing through the tiny house he lived in with his parents. Danny told me he had a roadie, a kid in his class who actually *carried* his accordion for him, before he even had a girlfriend.

Like Springsteen and most of the other members of the E Street Band, music was all Danny Federici ever did. Now that he's gone, you come to realize just how important a contribution he made to the E Street Band sound. Danny had his ups and downs in life. There was more than once where Springsteen could have pulled the plug. A couple of bad bouts with the bottle nearly wrecked his career and even his life. But Springsteen stayed steady as both a friend and bandleader, and others in the band threw their support Danny's way and never gave up on him. They knew the E Street Band needed the Phantom, and the Phantom needed the E Street Band. It was lucky that way, because Danny not only survived but thrived in the years before his untimely passing. And everyone benefited from the triumph.

**Y**ou can't replace a phantom. You can't say to someone, okay so now you're the new Phantom in the E Street Band. There is a new organ player who occupies the space that Danny once owned onstage, and he's pretty solid playing the keyboard parts that Danny played. But he's not there to replace the Phantom, just to fill in for him so that the music can live and the band can play on.

You can't replace a musician who's been in the band going on *four* decades, playing with it night after night, album after album, tour after tour. You just can't replace a phantom. And you certainly can't replace *the* Phantom." Which is why Bruce and the E Street Band won't even try. They act as if he's still there lurking in the shadows, playing his parts, phantom-like. And that's exactly the way it ought to be. 🎹



# THE SERVICE



## **A Celebration of Danny Federici** **Monday, April 21, 2008**

On Monday, April 28, 2008, close friends and family gathered at the United Methodist Church of Red Bank, NJ, for a funeral service and to celebrate the life of Danny Federici. Here we present all of the eulogies delivered that day, with thanks to the Federici family and each of the speakers for their kind permission.





**G**ood afternoon and thank you all for coming out to celebrate my father's life. I have so many memories that I'd like to share with you about my dad. It was difficult to pick just a few.

Whenever I was with my dad I was always excited, but pretty nervous, too, and for a good reason. I think it started when I was young and my father came to pick me up in this little orange Porsche 944. He had me holding on to my seat as we whipped around the back roads of Flemington. He definitely had a way of making my heart race—that's for sure.

So it wasn't that surprising when I was 12 and we were traveling around the country during my BMX racing days.... We found ourselves in California, in a rental car, and we needed to go from San Francisco to San Diego for a competition. My father had this great idea as he pulled off of an exit on the I-5 freeway. He got out of the car and put me in the driver's seat—I was 12! So even though I was gripping the steering wheel like I had gripped the seat when I was five in the Porsche, it was a

great time (and I was convinced I was a great driver).

He was a spur-of-the-moment kind of guy, my dad.

One of my fondest memories in that regard was one morning, when we were just waking up, having breakfast with my gram and pops, and my father walked in the room as an interview was taking place on TV with the drivers of the Indianapolis 500. My dad said, "Let's go for a ride." We got in the car and drove to the airport and flew to Indianapolis, and before I knew it, we were in the pit with race girls and Roger Penske just before the race started... rock star style.

I loved our spur-of-the-moment moments. There were so many.

The nervous excitement was just beginning when I was 13 and at the top of my BMX game. I found myself on my second jet ever, flying to St. Paul, MN where the Born in the U.S.A. tour was just getting started. I went from riding a bicycle in Jersey to seeing the world with bright eyes, and dancing in the dark next to

Courtney Cox with my bright red perm, parachute pants and Capezios, lookin' good and having the time of my life.

That's when I realized my father was born to make music. I would look up at him on that stage in amazement as he gracefully rocked out to thousands, night after night, with a smile.

And even though it wasn't always fun and games, my life with my father was a wonderful journey. And it was one that will always inspire me as I enter my new life with my beautiful sisters and all the adventures we have in store for us.

My father was always there for me. If he couldn't be in person, then he was through his music. All I had to do was listen to his notes and it would bring him by my side.

But I'm so fortunate to have shared every day of these last five weeks with him. I never wanted to leave his side. And he made me feel like he never wanted to leave mine. I'm so proud of my dad, not only for the legacy that he's left behind, but for the way he's always carried himself—from the notes he played on stage to his optimistic and graceful battle with melanoma.

And, now, as he watches over me and my sisters and my future family, I'll continue to need him, and all I have to do is listen to his music, and I'll know he's there.

I love you, Dad. 🐾

# JASON FEDERICI



# MAX WEINBERG

I'm honored to have been asked by Jason to speak to you today about my friend and colleague, Danny. So much has been said and written over the past few days about Dan with, naturally, the focus being the deep feeling he brought to his music and the consistently excellent, eloquent and precise execution of his playing. Whether it was on the Hammond B-3 organ, a keyboard specialty few musicians have mastered and on which Dan arguably led the pack, or his accordion, his "squeeze box" where Danny could instantly strike a melody and evoke a late night on a wooden front porch or belly-shaking a polka as a young musician-for-hire growing up in Flemington, or serving as the instrumental illustration of the sounds of humanity so important to the music he spent most of his life performing. Danny, as Bruce has so often acknowledged, was the most natural and organic player in our midst. Anyone who ever had the good fortune to work with him, or anyone who ever listened to his gorgeous, swirling, captivating and atmospheric playing can testify to that.

You know, Dan was always so proud of the musical legacy he helped create over his long career. I know—and we spoke of it often, particularly in recent days—that his 40-year association with Bruce and the E Street group of players—and as he would remind those who asked, remember, that *he* was the original member of the E Street Band—those years and that work brought tremendous joy and a long-lasting sense of fulfillment for Danny. The brevity of the years he shared with his family, friends, and colleagues must, I believe in the end, be tempered by the fact that Danny was a man who for so long, some 50 years in total, was able to achieve that which he had longed for since he was a kid: a world he could call his own filled with friends and associates who called him one of *their* own. And, for those 40

years of Danny's life, he caught up to many of those dreams.

If you knew Danny Federici, you knew he truly enjoyed his "fame." Of anyone who's ever made it with a rock group, basking in the adulation of fans of the music, gaining, perhaps, a late reservation at a favorite restaurant arranged because of your affiliation—well, Danny was always way upfront that these were some of the aspects he really did enjoy. I couldn't disagree! People, Danny lived the life! He was, and always will be Phantom Dan Federici of the E Street Band. If you knew Danny, you *know* he was that guy!

But digging deeper as our years rolled on, particularly after we regrouped in the late 1990s and we'd become parents, and more reflective, Dan spoke often to me of how special he believed what we did, as members of Bruce's E Street Band, had really been. Over the past few years of his valiant fight to beat back the infirmity of his flesh, he openly spoke to me of the deep spiritual component of this thing we did. That playing the music and performing the concerts was such a gift to people—a *privilege*, as he put it. He was so looking forward to once again being on tour, even though his illness had progressed.

Danny on tour. If you'd glance past the front of the stage, swing your way by Clarence, and fix your gaze on Danny and caught his eye, the face you saw looking at you was, I believe, a reflection of your own image, whether you were an audience member or a band member. You'd look at him and you knew *that* guy was having the time of his life.

There was Danny, his keyboards traditionally situated stage right, always described by Dan as "...front and center of the backline!" That's a pretty clever description of his location! But, listen to "Kitty's Back" or "Rosie," or any number of rockers in the catalogue, and you can picture Phantom Dan fairly leaping out of his

seat, physically working that B-3 organ like a farmer with his plow cultivating a field. He'd kick that thing around, push it, pull it, hammer at it until it screamed out the sounds he wanted. Or he'd caress it gently, as the gentle soul he was, giving voice to the plaintive wail of one of Bruce's characters. His playing could be steely tough, as sometimes he himself could be, or as evocatively romantic as he also could be, providing a tender lament for, perhaps, two star-crossed lovers. He'd swoop into a solo or grab the action on one of our leader's wind-up third verses and provide just the perfect musical landscape for the action. He certainly left his mark.

Drummers are usually keen observers of the mysterious ways bands go about their work. They sit in back, typically twirling their sticks, waiting for the keyboardists and guitarists to settle on the chords and, from back there, are able to witness exactly how each player works out his part. Danny was always an interesting read because his parts seemed to just bubble up from inside. As Patti once observed, there seemed to be no distance from Danny's heart to his fingers! His musicality was that direct and innocently refined.

In a group like the E Street Band, the musical communication we employ is a bit mystical. They don't teach this stuff in school, and it's not typically written down on manuscript paper. It's written in your soul and, if you're lucky and work hard enough, transmitted through your instrument. Danny worked hard enough!

Now, technically we've all heard about eighth notes, bar lines, and semi-demi-hemi quavers. That's not what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about "speaking" the unspoken, the direction of a leader, a nod of the head, a reference to a color, perhaps the shining of light, or the envelope of darkness—that's how rock bands go about creating their music. The best bands seem to have a sixth sense of what to do. And within a group of seasoned, enthusiastic professional rock musicians like the E Street Band, Danny's soulful approach to the music he drew forth stood out. He may have been the Phantom to many and for many reasons, but

## A Celebration of Danny Federici

Monday, April 21, 2008

Officiated by The Reverend Myrna Bethke

### Prelude

Words of Grace and Greeting: Page 870-871

Hymn: "Carnival on High" by Joe Purdy

### Opening Prayer (in unison):

God of us all, we thank you for Christ's grace, through which we pray to you in this dark hour. A life we love has been torn from us. Expectations the years once held have vanished. The mystery of death has stricken us. O God, you know the lives we live and the deaths we die, woven so strangely of purpose and of chance, of reason and of the irrational, of strength and of frailty, of happiness and of pain. Into your hands we commend the soul of Danny. No mortal life you have made is without eternal meaning. No earthly fate is beyond your redeeming. Though your grace can do far more than we can think or imagine, fulfill in Danny your purpose that reaches beyond time and death. Lead Danny from strength to strength, and fit Danny for love and service in your kingdom. Into your hands also we commit our lives. You alone, God, make us to dwell in safety. Whom, finally, save we on earth or in heaven but you? Help us to know the measure of our days, and how frail we are. Hold us in your keeping. Forgive us our sins. Save our minds from despair and our hearts from fear. And guard and guide us with your peace. Amen.

### The Lord's Prayer (in unison):

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.  
For ever and ever. Amen.

First Scripture Reading: Song of Solomon 2:10-13

Unison Psalter: Psalm 23, Page 873

Hymn: Sandy

Second Scripture Reading: Romans 8

Hymn: Across the Border

Gospel Lesson: John 14: selected verses

Eulogy: Rev. Myrna Bethke

Hymn: Lady of Spain

### A Time of Naming and Witnessing:

Jason Federici  
Max Weinberg  
Dave Marsh

Hymn: Irish Angel

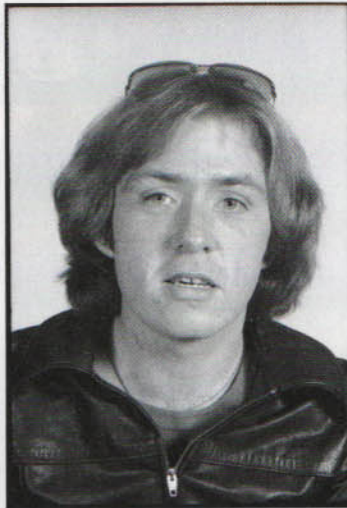
Prayers of Commendation and Thanksgiving:  
Pages 874-975

Hymn: If I Should Fall Behind

Dismissal With Blessing

Recessional Hymn





October 1975. Photos for Danny's first passport as he prepared to travel to Europe for Born to Run, taken by Barbara Pyle at 17 Seventh Avenue South, New York, NY.

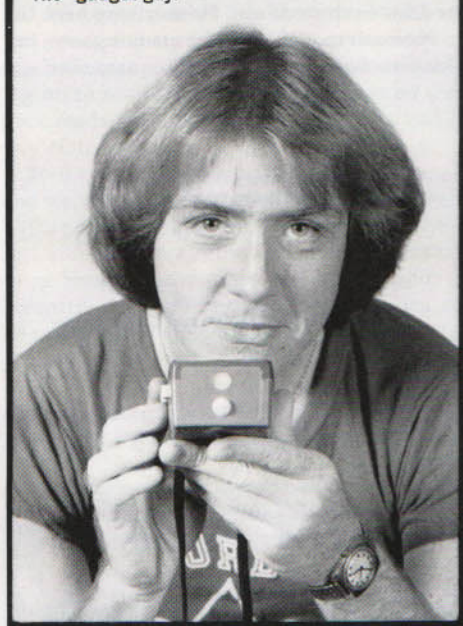
to his bandmates he was always present and accounted for—and ready to rock.

**T**here are a million and one stories about Dan Federici, and over the last few days as we friends, family, and associates gathered, they all made for great telling again. Some can even be repeated here, today. I'll leave that to others! But here's a tidbit I'll bet you didn't know.

Back in the early '70's, I slept with Danny Federici!

Wait—it's not what you think. Let me explain. You see, back in 1974, shortly after Roy and I joined the band, we were extremely fortunate to move up in our class of transportation to a GMC motor home from an Econoline van. The motorhome had these fold-down tables that converted to makeshift beds. In those days we rarely even slept in hotels. Well, Danny and I shared this barely full-sized table/bed. Head to toe we traveled the country. It was so sweet! I mean, *functional*!

The "gadget guy."



Danny, some of you know, was a gadget guy. The latest camera, computer, music player—he had it and would advise *you* to get it! "Don't be left out," he'd say. "The technical revolution is here." I don't really get machines. The most mechanical thing I know how to do is put a drum set together. So, as I succumbed to getting a drum machine or a computer or a digital camera over the past 20 years, Dan was the guy I called to figure out how to assemble the new object of my frustration. "First, make sure it's plugged in..." Dan clearly thought I was a weak specimen! But he was very, very patient with me. It was like that as long as I'd known him. I'd ask, and he'd take me step-by-step through a gadget's process. If you'd asked him, he would have done the same for you.

Dan was also a great photographer, and somewhere, somehow, Jason will organize all those photos stored in boxes from coast to coast. The photographic history of the E Street Band, as long as I've been around, was caught on film by Danny. He never got around to it, but maybe someday Danny's photographic musical history will see the light of day. From his group The Story Tellers, on to the Downtown Tangiers Band, to nights at the Upstage with Vini Lopez and Garry Tallent on through the great stages of the world, Danny had a unique view and experience and was savvy and stealthy enough with a camera to record the history. I've seen some of those pictures. Perhaps one day we'll see the rest.

Danny also loved fast cars, fast airplanes, and fast... *chord* changes! No, what I mean to say is he really loved to go fast. He worked diligently to earn his wings as a pilot and loved to describe the sensations he felt when he was free of the ground. He had his own airplane for a while but gave it up when he became a father to Madison and Harley who, along with Jason, became the central delight of his all too short life.

In some ways I don't think I've ever seen Danny happier than when he, Maya, and I went to the Kennedy Space Center during the Rising tour to witness our friend, Jim Wetherbee, command the space shuttle. It was a nighttime launch—a spectacular event and fairly rare.

The three of us toured the space center dur-

ing the day, had a simple dinner, and went to the family viewing area to await the launch. We waited... and waited... but it was a no go. The flight was scrubbed and the three of us left, having thoroughly enjoyed the day but disappointed that the rocket didn't blast off.

Occasionally over the years since that scrubbed launch, Danny and I bemoaned our luck in getting *this close* to witnessing a nighttime launch. Jump to the second week of this past March. My phone rings: "Hey man, Danny here—what's happenin'?" "What's happenin'?"—that was always Danny's salutation. Before I could answer, he said, "Guess where I just came back from?" He was so excited to tell me, I didn't get a chance to respond. "I just saw a nighttime launch—it was wild!"

Danny then spent the next half-hour recounting every detail of the launch: the flare of the engines, the roar cracking the air like a million firecrackers, the shaking of the ground, and, the most impressive aspect of the launch, the fantastic speed of the shuttle. "Man," he said, "to go *that fast*—wouldn't that be great!" Danny's description made the experience come alive for me, and his elation made *him* so alive. If I'd been there with him, instead of on the phone, I'm sure I'd have seen a big smile on his face, the corners of his eyes a bit crinkled up, those big blue eyes burning with life....

To hear the excitement in his voice, the wonder of all he'd seen, is the way I'll always remember Danny. It's so great to know that he'd had that experience just a few short weeks ago.

One of Danny's favorite film moments I recall was the scene in the movie *The Right Stuff* where, at the end, Dennis Quaid as astronaut Gordon Cooper is rocketing towards space. The voiceover tells us, as Cooper ascends the heavens, that the man finally realized his dream—to fly faster and higher than anyone had ever gone before.

Well, in my mind's eye I can see Danny in that flight suit, eyes burning bright, gleeful in the acceleration of his ride, headed towards eternity flying higher and faster than anyone had ever gone before....

Godspeed, my friend—Phantom Dan Federici—of the E Street Band. 🐉



# DAVE MARSH

**Y**esterday, I tried to figure out why there's been no E Street Band book. Not by me, not by anybody. Then I tried to imagine the chapter where I'd explain Danny. Now, how do you explain Danny?

For the last several days, I've watched people try. If you don't mind, I'd like to share the voices of people who didn't know Danny and loved him. Someone told me that when he played, so often with his eyes shut, it looked like Danny didn't seem to care what the audience thought. Maybe that was true in the moment. But when the playing was done, we know he cared that he had been heard.

Here is what some folks found in listening to him.

Brian Keizer, author and musician: "If a group of musicians from teenaged to whenever sought to imitate some of the essence of Bruce and Co., you always knew you couldn't be E Street because of what Danny brought. An amazing and, yes, underrated musician and always a head-scratcher to watch him up there doing what he did."

Michel Ramos, formerly the keyboard player—accordionist—in the BoDeans: "One thing I was really proud of was that when the BoDeans needed to replace me, they had to go out and get Danny Federici."

(Man, would I love to hear Danny on "Closer to Free"!)

Danny Alexander: "More than any other instrument, Federici's seemed to do its job to make sure everyone else could be the best they could be. He offered a wall of sound against which Roy Bittan could dribble his countless, intricate volleys. He seemed to offer resistance that heightened the punch of Garry Tallent's bass and Max Weinberg's drums. While Clarence's horn could open 'The River' with a jazzy, lonesome blues, Federici's organ stepped in to answer the call of Springsteen's keening at the end of the song. In 'Badlands,' he'd be this bright yellow light behind the chords, offering bravura flourishes at the end of certain lines, like a cross between the Hammond B-3 and slide guitar. He was always underscoring lyrics and phrases coming from other members of the band, making them shine."

Best of all, what Karen Brown from Mississippi Public Broadcasting found out: "I never consciously identified or separated Danny's contributions to the E Street Band, but as I listened to that brief remembrance on NPR this morning my heart just tore up hearing those strains from 'You're Missing.' As people have made suggestions of songs to tell Danny's story, I suddenly hear every note he played, just by hearing the title of each song. I couldn't be more surprised to know that his music was inside me all along and how hearing it now makes me ache all over."

And if you'll let me take my turn as a critic for just a minute: Danny is always the inter-

ruptive voice, the one that offers a suddenly clear route to the musical spirit. His was the sacred heart of the band on everything from "I'm a Rocker" to "Racing in the Street." Danny almost never dominated the music, but he'd sneak in there and smash your consciousness to smithereens, leaving you with sheer feeling. A true soul man in that respect.

Mostly, though, I keep coming back to what Charlie Giordano told me: "Of course I don't play like Danny. To play like Danny, you'd have to be Danny."

**W**hen Danny was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma, he paid Barbara and me the biggest honor that our friends who have become cancer patients or loved ones of cancer patients can offer: He asked us to help him find a way.

He was seen by the best of the best: Murray Brennan, Kristen's doctor, the Sloan-Kettering chief of surgery for 25 years, and the only other person who is called The Boss voluntarily by those he works with. But even the best surgery is not a cure for melanoma.

After surgery, Danny didn't want conventional chemo. Who could blame him? The results of conventional medicine for melanoma patients have been the same for 40 years and they are dismal. As Bob Maki, the Sloan-Kettering sarcoma oncologist, told me, "If we can figure out melanoma better in my lifetime, I will be delighted. I know we are close. It has been super-frustrating as until now these diagnoses have lagged behind everything else. Even sarcomas."

Danny's response was to look in other countries for other kinds of help. Then he met another Sloan-Kettering oncologist. Danny wrote me this in January: "So we worked with my oncologist Paul Chapman at Sloan, and he mixed up something he has been trying out on a few people and had had results but not as quick and good as mine."

Danny's response to the chemo was amazing to everyone, and for those who know about the disease in general, remain amazing no matter how brief that response may have been.

Those results won't be brief in the world as a whole. Like all great souls who find themselves in that fix, Danny responded to his illness by worrying about others at least as much as himself. In the period around the surgery, [his wife] Maya worried about it, saying Danny fretted about her and the girls and Jason but voiced no concern for himself. When he found Chapman—who is truly a fine physician in every sense, and I grade hard on that subject—and got the unbelievable break of a response, Danny didn't just rejoice. He set up The Danny Federici Melanoma Fund. Dr. Chapman's work will benefit.

Go to the [dannymfund.org](http://dannymfund.org) website. On it, you can find Danny reaching out, thinking

about the next patient or the next person who doesn't need to be a patient. I'm gonna read his full statement because it needs to be heard—although today what really matters is that he wanted it to be heard:

*What people take for granted on a daily basis, among so many other things, is their skin. I spent my life, like many others, catching some rays, surfing, hanging out in the sun and it never bothered me until now. Who knew that something as simple as a proper sunscreen or keeping yourself covered up on a sunny day could one day save your life? Our culture looks at a nice tan as a sign of luxury. We spend time in tanning booths when we can't go to the beach or lay by the pool. It's time to think again. Especially if you're fair-skinned, have freckles, or light eyes. Be aware of the dangers, take precaution, and have yourself checked out regularly by a dermatologist from head to toe. It could absolutely make the difference in your life.*

These words come from someone who was fighting for his life and decided to turn that into a fight for anybody's life. This is a fine measure of who Danny Federici was. I hope everyone will go to the site and pay Danny the honor of standing up for his fight. I hope we'll also remember him by following his advice about the sun and our bodies.

Danny's life, in its struggles as well as its successes, the total reality of it, makes me think of my favorite passage in American literature, a paragraph from James Baldwin's short story, "Sonny's Blues." It's the story of a musician who is trying to find his way back from the disease addiction and of his brother, who is trying to grasp why Sonny needs to be a musician in order to heal. The answer arrives while he's listening to a solo by another figure in Sonny's band:

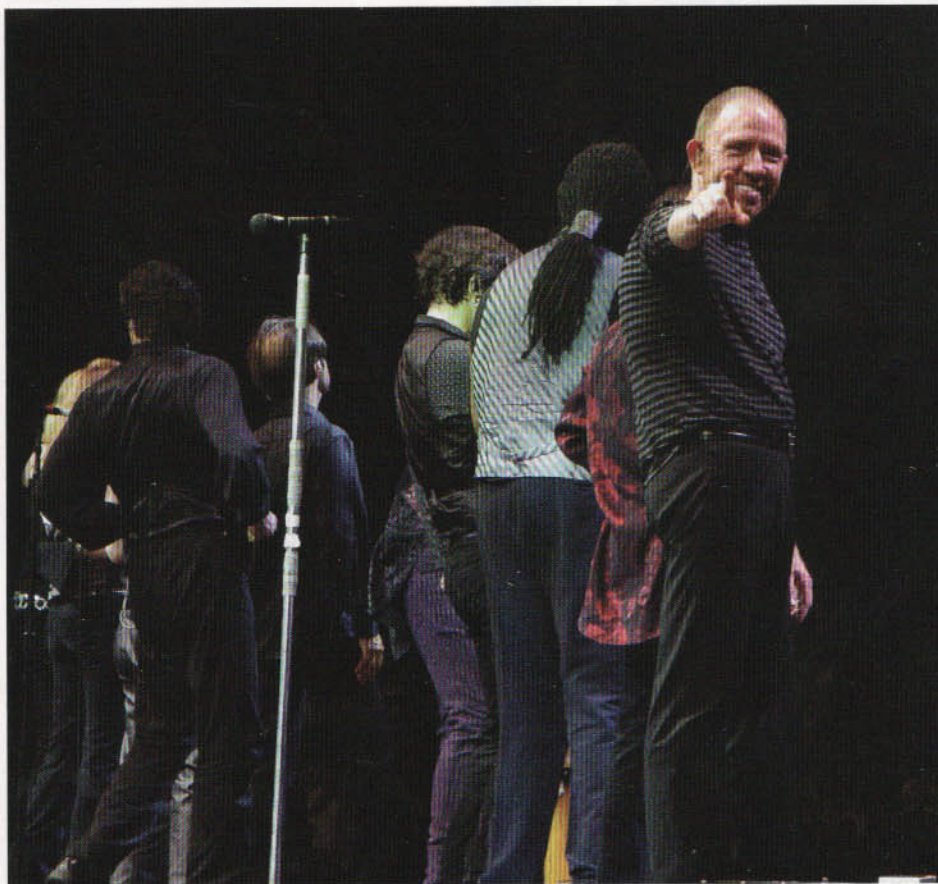
*He began to tell us what the blues were all about. They were not about anything very new. He and his boys up there were keeping it new, at the risk of ruin, destruction, madness, and death, in order to find new ways to make us listen. For, while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph is never new, it always must be heard. There isn't any other tale, it's the only light we've got in all this darkness.*

If Danny truly was—as I have been told and as I believe—Phantom Dan, the minister of mystery, then it is in the light that we will always find him. He told me in our last interview that the organ was a color instrument. And now what I hear when I listen to him is the clarity of light—the everyday light that is transparent because it contains every shade of every color.

Danny was a master of the musical moment. I am grateful that so many of those moments have been recorded. And I am grieved—appalled, really—that there are so many moments that we will not get to share.

Damn the darkness. Viva Federici! 🎸





## RICH LUSTER

**H**ello, I'm Rich Luster. Danny and I were friends. I've been trying to remember how long we've known each other. My first memory of Danny was probably in 1960 or '61. The grade school we went to had art class and music class in the school basement. Kids in art class usually could hear the kids in music class trying to play the symphonette. One day,

I remember hearing a different sound: it was music, and it was nice. It was accordion music. When I walked out of art class that day, I saw Danny leaving the music room with another kid carrying Danny's accordion. I just remember him being so cool—playing music and having his own ten-year-old roadie.

Over the years, Danny and I remained friends. I've always been busy working and

being with my family, and Danny would always tease me and encourage me to travel and try new things. So back some years ago, I took my family to Europe to see Danny and the band play. When we met up with Danny in Dublin, he told us he was a little worried about how rowdy the crowds could become and he didn't want my little girls to be upset, so he managed to get us some seats on the scaffold on the side of the stage. It was the making of a life-long memory for my daughters, and in my mind, it was pure Danny—he always watched out for my girls.

Danny traveled all over the world and lived in many places, but he never forgot Flemington. He came back to Flemington a few years ago to do a show for the high school foundation, and it was a sell-out. Flemington loved Danny, but in his humble way, he seemed surprised to see almost a thousand people cheering their hearts out for him and his music.

Danny and I became closer over the years, and we used to meet for lunch at a little restaurant in Flemington. We both enjoyed talking about cars, trucks, and just about anything with a motor. Danny was an inquisitive man, and he would get animated talking about new things that were coming along like a computer, phone, or camera, but what Danny really got excited about was his family.

The last 15 months were difficult for Danny. On many occasions we'd meet or talk on the phone, he told me that without the love of Madison and Harley and the love and support of Maya, Jason, and Bruce he wasn't sure if he could keep going. Because of their love and encouragement, he was able to keep active until the very end. He asked me to share some thoughts with each of them in private, and I'll keep that promise today.

I'm a lucky man: I've seen Sandy Koufax pitch, Elvis sing, and Ali fight Frasier. But what I'll always cherish is the memory of seeing Danny play with Bruce and the band. I wish I'd asked him for his autograph on a baseball.

I'm going to miss Danny. He was a world-class celebrity, an incredible musician who was brave enough to leave his hometown and follow his dreams, but for me he was a brother who was just a phone call away. 🐾



Danny returns to his old high school in Flemington, NJ, to perform a benefit for the Hunterdon Central Foundation, September 14, 2002.



# BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

Let me start with the stories.

Back in the days of miracles, the frontier days when "Mad Dog" Lopez and his temper struck fear into the band, small club owners, innocent civilians and all women, children and small animals.

Back in the days when you could still sign your life away on the hood of a parked car in New York City.

Back shortly after a young red-headed accordionist struck gold on the *Ted Mack Amateur Hour* and he and his mama were sent to Switzerland to show them how it's really done.

Back before beach bums were featured on the cover of *Time* magazine.

I'm talking about back when the E Street Band was a communist organization! My pal, quiet, shy Dan Federici was a one-man creator of some of the hairiest circumstances of our 40-year career... and that wasn't easy to do. He had "Mad Dog" Lopez to compete with... Danny just outlasted him.

Maybe it was the "police riot" in Middletown, New Jersey. A show we were doing to raise bail money for "Mad Dog" Lopez who was in jail in Richmond, Virginia, for having an altercation with police officers who we'd aggravated by playing too long. Danny allegedly knocked over our huge Marshall stacks on some of Middletown's finest who had rushed the stage because we broke the law by... playing too long.

As I stood there watching, several police officers crawled out from underneath the speaker cabinets and rushed away to seek medical attention. Another nice young officer stood in front of me onstage waving his nightstick,



Steel Mill rehearsal, 1970.

poking and calling me nasty names. I looked over to see Danny with a beefy police officer pulling on one arm while Flo Federici, his first wife, pulled on the other, assisting her man in resisting arrest.

A kid leapt from the audience onto the stage, momentarily distracting the beefy officer with the insults of the day. Forever thereafter "Phantom" Dan Federici slipped into the crowd and disappeared.

A warrant out for his arrest and one month on the lam later, he still hadn't been brought to justice. We hid him in various places, but now we had a problem. We had a show coming at Monmouth College. We needed the money, and we had to do the gig. We tried a replacement, but it didn't work out. So Danny, to all of our admiration, stepped up and said he'd risk his freedom, take the chance and play.

Show night. 2,000 screaming fans in the Monmouth College gym. We had it worked out so Danny would not

appear onstage until the moment we started playing. We figured the police who were there to arrest him wouldn't do so onstage during the show and risk starting another riot.

Let me set the scene for you. Danny is hiding, hunkered down in the backseat of a car in the parking lot. At five minutes to eight, our scheduled start time, I go out to whisk him in. I tap on the window.

"Danny, come on, it's time."

I hear back, "I'm not going."

Me: "What do you mean you're not going?"

Danny: "The cops are on the roof of the gym. I've seen them and they're going to nail me the minute I step out of this car."

As I open the door, I realize that Danny has been smoking a little something and had grown rather paranoid. I said, "Dan, there are no cops on the roof."

He says, "Yes, I saw them, I tell you. I'm not coming in."

So I used a procedure I'd call on often over the next forty years in dealing with my old pal's concerns. I threatened him... and cajoled. Finally, out he came. Across the parking lot and into the gym we swept for a rapturous concert during which we laughed like thieves at our excellent dodge of the local cops.

At the end of the evening, during the last song, I pulled the entire crowd up onto the stage and Danny slipped into the audience and out the front door. Once again, "Phantom" Dan had made his exit. (I still get the occasional card from the old Chief of Police of Middletown wishing us well. Our histories are forever intertwined.) And that, my friends, was only the beginning.

There was the time Danny quit the band during a rough period at Max's Kansas City, explaining to me that he was leaving to fix televisions. I asked him to think about that and come back later.

Or Danny, in the band rental car, bouncing off several parked cars after a night of entertainment, smashing out the windshield with

**Left:** Handbill for the infamous "riot show," 9/11/70 at Clearwater Swim Club, where Federici got the nickname "Phantom Dan."

**Below:** Portion of original article from 9/12/70 *Asbury Park Press*, stating police are still searching for Danny.

ing arrest, and drug use.

Sgt. Halliday reported that the search still is under way for Danny Federici, Belmar, the Steel Mill organist, on charges of assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest. To date, no other warrants for band members have been issued nor have any charges been filed in connection with the marijuana and weapons found under the bandstand, but arrests are expected soon, he said.

Jeff Tramitz, 19, a local res-









his head but saved from severe injury by the huge, hard cowboy hat he bought in Texas on our last Western swing.

Or Danny, leaving a large marijuana plant on the front seat of his car in a tow-away zone. The car was promptly towed. He said, "Bruce, I'm going to go down and report that it was stolen." I said, "I'm not sure that's a good idea."

Down he went and straight into the slammer without passing go.

Or Danny, the only member of the E Street Band to be physically thrown out of the Stone Pony. Considering all the money we made them, that wasn't easy to do.

Or Danny receiving and surviving a "cautionary assault" from an enraged but restrained "Big Man" Clarence Clemons while they were living together and Danny finally drove the "Big Man" over the big top.

Or Danny assisting me in removing my foot from his stereo speaker after being the only band member ever to drive me into a violent rage.

And through it all, Danny played his beautiful, soulful B-3 organ for me and our love grew. And continued to grow. Life is funny like that. He was my homeboy, and great, and for that you make considerations... And he was much more tolerant of my failures than I was of his.

**W**hen Danny wasn't causing chaos, he was a sweet, talented, unassuming, unpretentious good-hearted guy who simply had an unchecked ability to make good fortune and things in general go fabulously wrong.

But beyond all of that, he also had a mountain of the right stuff. He had the heart and soul of an engineer. He learned to fly. He was always up on the latest technology and would explain it to you patiently and in enormous detail. He was always "souping" something up: his car, his stereo, his B-3. When Patti joined the band, he was the most welcoming, thoughtful, kindest friend to the first woman entering our "boys club."

He loved his kids, always bragging about Jason, Harley, and Madison, and he loved his wife Maya for the new things she brought into his life.

And then there was his artistry. He was the most intuitive player I've ever seen. His style was slippery and fluid, drawn to the spaces the other musicians in the E Street Band left. He wasn't an assertive player, he was a complementary player. A true accompanist. He naturally supplied the glue that bound the band's sound together. In doing so, he created for himself a very specific style. When you hear Dan Federici, you don't hear a blanket of sound, you hear a riff, packed with energy, flying above everything else for a few moments and then gone back in the track. "Phantom" Dan Federici. Now you hear him, now you don't.

Offstage, Danny couldn't recite a lyric or a chord progression for one of my songs. Onstage, his ears opened up. He listened, he felt, he played, finding the perfect hole and placement for a chord or a flurry of notes. This style created a tremendous feeling of spontane-

ity in our ensemble playing.

In the studio, if I wanted to loosen up the track we were recording, I'd put Danny on it and not tell him what to play. I'd just set him loose. He brought with him the sound of the carnival, the amusements, the boardwalk, the beach, the geography of our youth and the heart and soul of the birthplace of the E Street Band.

Then we grew up. Very slowly. We stood together through a lot of trials and tribulations. Danny's response to a mistake onstage, hard times, catastrophic events was usually a shrug and a smile. Sort of an "I am but one man in a raging sea, but I'm still afloat. And we're all still here."

I watched Danny fight and conquer some tough addictions. I watched him struggle to put his life together and in the last decade when the band reunited, thrive on sitting in his seat behind that big B-3, filled with life and, yes, a new maturity, passion for his job, his family and his home in the brother and sisterhood of our band.

Finally, I watched him fight his cancer without complaint and with great courage and spirit. When I asked him how things looked, he just said, "what are you going to do? I'm looking forward to tomorrow." Danny, the sunny side up fatalist. He never gave up right to the end.

A few weeks back we ended up onstage in Indianapolis for what would be the last time. Before we went on I asked him what he wanted to play and he said, "Sandy." He wanted to strap on the accordion and revisit the boardwalk of our youth during the summer nights when we'd walk along the boards with all the time in the world.

So what if we just smashed into three parked cars, it's a beautiful night! So what if we're on the lam from the entire Middletown police department, let's go take a swim! He wanted to play once more the song that is of course about the end of something wonderful and the beginning of something unknown and new.

Let's go back to the days of miracles. Pete Townshend said, "a rock 'n' roll band is a crazy thing. You meet some people when you're a kid and unlike any other occupation in the whole

The Bottom Line,  
New York, NY  
August 14, 1975.



BARBARA PYLE PHOTO

world, you're stuck with them your whole life no matter who they are or what crazy things they do."

If we didn't play together, the E Street Band at this point would probably not know one another. We wouldn't be in this room together. But we do... We do play together. And every night at 8 p.m., we walk out on stage together and that, my friends, is a place where miracles occur... old and new miracles. And those you are with, in the presence of miracles, you never forget. Life does not separate you. Death does not separate you. Those you are with who create miracles for you, like Danny did for me every night, you are honored to be amongst.

Of course we all grow up, and we know "it's only rock and roll"... but it's not. After a lifetime of watching a man perform his miracle for you, night after night, it feels an awful lot like love.

So today, making another one of his mysterious exits, we say farewell to Danny, "Phantom" Dan, Federici. Father, husband, my brother, my friend, my mystery, my thorn, my rose, my keyboard player, my miracle man, and lifelong member in good standing of the house-rockin', pants-droppin', earth-shockin', hard-rockin', booty-shakin', love-makin', heart-breakin', soul-cryin'... and, yes, death-defyin', legendary E Street Band. 🎸



# STAGE STORIES

**T**he day after spinning yarns at Danny Federici's memorial service, Bruce was back on stage with the E Street Band, with emotions running high at back-to-back rescheduled Florida shows in Tampa and Orlando. "Thank you so much for coming out tonight and helping us through," Bruce said toward the end of the first night back. Introducing oldie "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?" on April 23 in Orlando, he again thanked the crowd for being there: "hope we didn't inconvenience you by switching the nights around, I appreciate that." Not that fans needed any kind of apology: feeling the loss deeply in their own way, the crowd was "in concert" with the performers every step of the way over these intense two nights. Patti Scialfa rejoined the band for the first time in 2008, a show of E Street solidarity. A moving video montage spoke to Danny's importance to the band, while a lone spotlight lit up Danny's empty station before Charlie Giordano discreetly emerged to take over organ and accordion duties for these nights and those to come. And over the next couple weeks, as the band pointedly revisited the boardwalk sounds from their early days, Bruce would find he had more stories to tell about his blood brother. *Transcriptions by Mark Stricherz.*

## April 22, 2008, Tampa, FL

Good evening and thank you for coming out tonight. I appreciate that. We want to thank you for all the prayers and condolences received for Danny. We thank you very much. He was able to come out and play with us... I guess it was about three weeks back. And we had a lovely night. Roy, you better get this one right *[laughs]*. Somebody's watchin'!

—introduction to "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)"

## April 25, 2008, Atlanta, GA

I want to thank you for all the prayers and condolences for Danny—appreciate it very much. His family appreciates it very much. When the band first started... I met Danny when we were 18 in Asbury Park, in a place called The Upstage. So, actually, in the beginning Danny and "Mad Dog" Vincent Lopez asked me to join the band that they had at the time. But the band—the E Street Band—when the complete E Street Band first went on the road it was me, Danny, Garry, "Mad Dog" Lopez, and Clarence. So, it was just a little five-piece band—with a set list of masterpieces!

—introduction to "Blinded By the Light"

## April 27, 2008, Charlotte, NC

So, we've been diggin' back in the box the past four or five nights. Gonna put the Professor to the test now!

Now Danny, of course, when he was young, he won the Ted Mack Amateur Hour on the accordion. His mama sewed him up a gold lamé jacket, and they sent you to Switzerland, where I guess the idea was you're gonna come from the States and show them how it was really done over there

*[laughs]*. So, Danny and the accordion were always intermixed.

And really, it was Danny and Vini that kind of invited me into their band. I met Danny when I was 18. And, with the exception of Steve, who I met at 16 and haven't been able to get rid of since—or he hasn't been able to get rid of me, really that's what [it is]—Danny was a long, long, long standing member here. So, I'm gonna miss him a lot.

Danny was—him and Mad Dog, they were the unruly citizens of the E Street Band. My favorite phone call from Danny was always, "Bruce, come quick!"

—introduction to "Wild Billy's Circus Story"

## April 28, 2008, Greenshoro, NC

I want to thank some fans who were outside and took up a nice little collection for Danny's fund. We appreciate that! Danny has a melanoma fund, [it goes to] curing melanoma cancer.

Danny—with the exception of Steve, who I met when we were 16 in the Eatontown, New Jersey Hullabaloo Club—I met Danny when we were 18 at a place in Asbury Park, a place called The Upstage. He said he was from Flemington... Flemington, New Jersey... the fabulous town of Flemington. And, he really, actually, asked me to join his band with him and "Mad Dog" Lopez. I played with Danny for 40 years, I guess, and survived. He had nine lives, and he used up about five of mine.

Danny was always into something, you know. Let me see, I told a short story last night. I'll tell another one tonight.

Danny had a tendency to lift things, particularly when he was younger, because he was kind of a gadget freak. He was always lookin' to soup up his car or soup up his organ or something—his stereo set.

It was usually in hand. But then I came down the motel corridor one day, and I found Danny with a screwdriver, takin' out the up/down buttons out of

the elevator on our way out of the hotel. 'Cause, you know, towels, not good enough for him! He needs the buttons from that elevator!

I said "Danny, what do you need the buttons for?"

He said, "Oh, man, the color's perfect. I'm gonna put it on my organ, and when I hit the Leslie it's gonna light up!"

We needed to innovate in those days. We had to. We were livin' off the fat of the land. We had to innovate.

On another night, we're playing in this club and I noticed that at the end of the night that the jukebox is kind of shoved at an angle, and I just catch a glimpse of Danny with a huge speaker under his arms, slippin' out the side door. So, of course, I go back, I peek inside the jukebox—empty! Empty jukebox!

I'm gonna send this one out to our old pal....

—introduction to "It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City"

## April 30, 2008, Charlottesville, VA

Every night we've been pullin' something out of the box from when the band was originally... the first gig we did was we opened for Cheech and Chong. And a guy came up and pulled on my shirt in the middle of the set and said, "Cheech says you gotta get off!" *[Laughs]* I'm sure we were playin' too long. That band was me, Danny, "Mad Dog" Vincent Lopez, Clarence Clemons, and Garry Tallent. And we toured with that band for quite a while.

First, we started out in Vini's "Mad Dog" Lopez's Ford. That was a little tough. Big Man takes up a little space there. Then we went to the van. We had a little, like, Econoline van. That was worse than the car because the seats were so rigid—you drove for hours and hours sittin' up like little robots. And Big Man took up quite a bit of space in that van. Then we went to a Central Jersey bus. It was one of the buses that, literally, ferried people back to New York City, except they took out the last rows of seats and they put in metal army bunks. Unfortunately, they forgot to bolt them to the floor.

So, me and Steve, we ran into the back and we took the last two bunks, figuring that would be the



You're Missing: Tampa, FL  
April 22, 2008.

RENE VAN DIEMEN PHOTO



best spot. Of course, we were too stupid to realize we picked the two bunks that were right over the engine, number one. And whenever that bus took a hard right or a hard left, your bunk would come up off one side and tip over. I could do this in my sleep—I would catch myself before I would smash into Steve and give myself a little push back.

And then we went on to the wonderful things like the GMC van, and we eventually got an actual, real bus, like the country acts tour in, after that. We thought, we were like—it was gravy now from here on in. We were livin' and it was three decks—three decks of bunks.

One of the great memories of Danny was one night after I guess we'd played a few shows in a row, he was getting the middle bunk. There was a little curtain that you pulled across for privacy's sake. And the bus took a real hard right turn, I was standing in the aisle at the time, and Danny came shooting out of his bunk, smashed into the bunk on the other side and dropped down in the middle of the aisle... and reached around, found a bag, put it under his head, and kept sleeping!

I've never seen anything like it. He never opened his eyes—flew out of the bunk, bounced off, down in the middle of the aisle, [snores]. Gone!

So, anyway, this is for our old brother.

—introduction to "For You"

## May 2, 2008, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

The last couple of weeks we've been telling a Danny story every night, of which there are many, many, many, many.

My parents moved to California when I was 19, in 1969. They wanted to go someplace where nobody would hassle them, and do all the drugs they wanted to do. Not really—that's a little joke.

When my parents moved out of the house that I'd lived in since I was 13, the band moved in—like, the same night. It was me, Danny Federici, "Mad Dog" Vincent Lopez, and Danny's newborn son. You can imagine! I'm not sure how he survived with a house full of 19-year-olds.

Danny was a freak for the C.B. radio. He was like a gadget nut. So he took the room that my grandmother died in, and he turned it into a radio room [laughs]. And to do that, Danny had to climb on the roof. He kicked out the window on the second floor and then got this huge C.B. radio antenna on our roof.

Danny would be in his room until three a.m., contacting anybody you can imagine. [From crowd: "Aliens!"] Aliens! That's exactly right! Contacting aliens! And he was quite successful. He was quite successful because in those days the C.B. radio, it hadn't even hit its stride.

So he'd sit in that room, and then he would invite people over that he heard, that he got in touch with. We were like the only house of freaks in New Jersey at the time. [Crowd cheers approval.] And so I would come downstairs and I would see Danny in the living room filled with, like, astonished truck drivers—not quite sure how they got there, you know, or what they were... or what we were doin' there.

That lasted for exactly 30 days and the landlord came and threw us all out.

Oh, and for you young kids, a C.B. radio is just ... a version of a localized internet.

—introduction to "Growin' Up" 🐾

## Phantom Magic Night for Danny in Tampa

(Crystal Cat 3CD)

VENUE: St. Pete Times Forum

CITY: Tampa, FL

DATE: April 22, 2008

SOUND QUALITY: 8

PERFORMANCE: 10

PACKAGING: 9

**T**he first thing you need to do before listening to these sets—as the titles suggest, the first E Street Band shows following Danny Federici's death—is to read Springsteen's heartfelt, at times heartbreaking, eulogy for the late keyboardist [which appears previously in this issue]. A vivid sense of what Federici brought to the E Street table emerges, resulting in a profoundly different listening experience with the *Phantom Magic Night* CDs.

The eulogy also appears in the booklet to *Tampa*, and both the *Tampa* and *Orlando* liners have reviews (including Backstreets.com's) of the concerts. "If the Tampa show was about mourning Danny's death," offers reviewer C.F. Sodalak, "[Orlando] was about celebrating Danny's life." I'm further struck with the realization of how we fans rarely ponder what performers are actually feeling or thinking about up there. Certainly the E Streeters are anything but one-dimensional, but as entertainers, they're charged with, well, *entertaining*. So if someone is having a bad day, they're not supposed to show it; their job is to help the rest of us forget that bad day we're having.

But losing a band member cuts a lot deeper. The Tampa and Orlando concerts were steeped in emotion and rife with tributes, some overt and some, tellingly, as subtle as Federici's own musical contributions. What, indeed, was going through the musicians' heads when they strode onstage those two evenings to stand and viewed a Federici video tribute? On the first night, they then launched into "Backstreets," while on the second a newly arranged "Blood Brothers" was unveiled, each tune carrying its own indelible message of friendship, of loyalty, of lifetime bonds, and, yes, of mortality.

It's that emotional subtext and its collective acknowledgment among musicians and fans that made the Tampa and Orlando shows so teeth-rattlingly powerful. Each night was roughly divided into three sections: the first, heavy on oldies, many nodding specifically at Federici; the middle, core *Magic* tunes and uplifting classics; and the last, pure unabashed celebration, audibles ("Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" on the 22nd, "Jungleland" on the 23rd) included. Throughout, the highlights piled up.

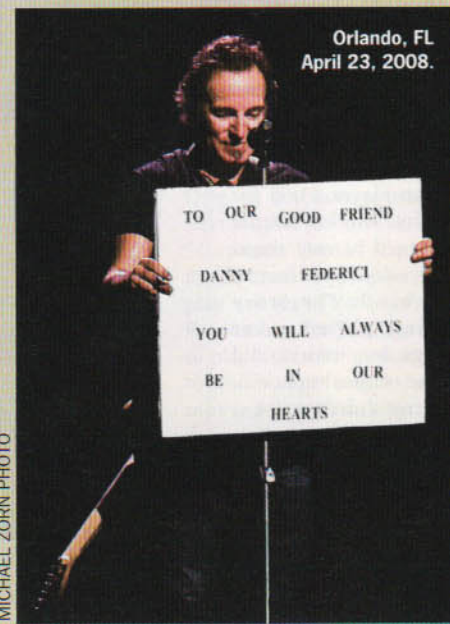
Among those from *Tampa*: "Backstreets," obviously, performed while a spotlight shined down upon Federici's organ riser and carefully placed accordion; the way Bruce lingered on the title phrase in "Lonesome Day," acknowledging the obvious; likewise in "No Surrender," when he sang the tagline "no retreat, no surrender"; the pairing of "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" with "Growin' Up," Charlie Giordano contributing some wonderful accordion in the former, Bruce referencing Federici's hometown of Flemington, NJ, during the latter; a cover of the early-20th century gospel number "I'll Fly Away," dedicated to Federici; and of course "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," just to bring the whole brotherhood notion back full circle.

And from *Orlando*: a blazing, swaggering "Spirit in the Night"; an elegiac "The River," its meditation on how easily things can slip away made all the more poignant by the circumstances; a riotously shambolic "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street," prefaced by Bruce's thank-you to the audience for the many expressions of condolences, and interspersed with him giving band members helpful cues ("bridge!"); the way his vocal took on an additional note of gospel urgency in "The Promised Land"; and the unearthly guitar solo in the middle of "The Rising," and how it lifted the venue up at precisely the moment when everyone needed it the most.

Sound-wise, neither set is a Crystal Cat classic, though both are quite acceptable, with *Tampa* edging out *Orlando* slightly due to more presence on the vocals and less noise. Setlists are strikingly different; the Orlando concert includes guest Roger McGuinn on a pair of Byrds covers, while *Tampa* adds a free third disc (the bonus material comes from April 30 in Charlottesville, including Bruce's funny tale about a Federici road-trip misadventure to introduce "For You").

Springsteen & Co. gave Federici a hero's sendoff while giving themselves a desperately needed release. In a sense, every E Street Band concert from that point onward would be a sendoff and a release, too, by virtue of the group continuing on in the spirit of what brought them all together in the first place. 🐾

—Fred Mills





# THE STORY TELLERS

BY  
**ROBERT  
SANTELLI**

**I**n 1965, a young Danny Federici from Flemington, NJ, fresh from accordion gigs at school, on the radio, in restaurants and even nursing homes, joined his first rock 'n' roll band, The Story Tellers. To do so, he put down his accordion and began playing the organ, an instrument that was gaining wide popularity in rock in the mid-'60s. Led by Billy Chinnock, an over-energized, wild-willed guitar player and singer with visions of the Rolling Stones and Otis Redding running through his musical mind, The Story Tellers were one of those bands that laid the foundation for New Jersey's great rock legacy.

History has mostly overlooked the band; in the state's collective musical memory, it doesn't rank with the Castiles, Springsteen's earliest group, or even close to Steel Mill, the biggest and best Jersey Shore band that never signed a record deal. But The Story Tellers cut a single ("Cry With Me"), played hip New York clubs like the Electric Circus, Cheetah, Steve Paul's Scene, and the Hullabaloo, jammed with Jimi Hendrix, and gave Federici and Chinnock, both of whom would go on to bigger things after the band's demise, a strong dose of the rock 'n' roll life that they'd never shake.

After Federici's passing, I searched out surviving members of The Story Tellers for their recollections of the band and their departed organ player. Here is what they had to say.

## DRUMMER LARRY LERNER

I first met Danny in Bill Chinnock's basement in Milburn, New Jersey. I had been looking for a new band to join, so I put up an ad in the Greenwich Village club, the Night Owl. Chinnock saw the ad and gave me a call to come and audition for a new band he was forming. I actually dropped out of high school to play with The Story Tellers. Danny did the same. We were high school drop-outs. Danny was a real virtuoso musician; he could play anything. Danny would take a solo and almost always he had a big grin on his face. I remember Chinnock hated it. He screamed at Danny and would say to him, "Danny, look like you're suffering, not like you're having a good time!" Danny couldn't help it. He'd be playing these amazing lines, just amazing, and he'd be smiling the whole way through. That drove Chinnock nuts.

Over the years, Danny got this reputation of being really quiet and reserved. His nickname, after all, was the Phantom. But Danny had a mischievous side to him that few people outside the band ever saw. He played practical jokes and did things that made people just crack up. He had a great way about him—the perfect guy you'd want in your band as a kid—a great musician, a good friend, and very funny.

We played some memorable gigs, none more memorable than one in New York when we played with Jimi Hendrix. I'll never forget it. We're playing a basic blues song, and I see someone in the audience move toward the stage with a guitar. It was dark in the club, so I couldn't see who it was, being in the back of the stage behind my drum kit. Anyway, this person has a guitar and plugs into Chinnock's amp and starts playing with us. All I could see was this guy's back and his big head of hair, but as soon as he took his first solo, I knew it was Hendrix. He jammed with us for, like 20 minutes—Jimi took a solo, then Bill, then Danny and back around again, and when he was done,

Hendrix unplugged his guitar, said thanks, and went back into the audience. We were just dumbfounded.

## BASS PLAYER BILL WOLF

The first time we heard Danny play, we just couldn't believe how good he was. I remember smiling to myself when he came to our first band practice and he brought his mother! She drove him from Flemington to Milburn, which is just outside Newark. But here we were getting this band together, and our organ player shows up with his mother. He was too young to drive, but even if he wasn't, he probably would have shown up with her anyway. She was so dedicated to his career as a musician. She would do anything for him as long as she thought it was going to help his career.

Danny didn't reveal himself back then as being an accordion player. I don't know if he was embarrassed about playing it or not, but he really wanted to be known as an organ player. He'd get behind the keyboards and he'd be way ahead of everyone else in the band. The Story Tellers played cover songs, but we also did some original material. Danny didn't write—

*The Story Tellers in Bill Chinnock's backyard, 1967: Danny Federici (far right), Bill Chinnock (left), Larry Lerner (center), Jim Meltzer (top), and Bill Wolf (bottom).*

Chinnock did. But Danny always put his signature on the songs Chinnock wrote. His solos were pretty fantastic. I always thought Danny was a major talent, from the moment I first heard him play. When we went and played down the Jersey Shore, there was no one in Danny's league when it came to keyboards. We'd drive down to the Shore and play the clubs there. We had a VW bus, filled it with equipment and went down there pretty much every weekend, or least when we weren't playing in New York City.

I remember when we recorded our one and only single. We recorded it for the Kama Sutra label. Unfortunately, it was never officially released, though copies did float around because thousands were pressed. It was called "Cry to Me" and it never got any airplay, never did anything. But we were one of the first Shore bands—maybe the first—to go into the recording studio and actually make a record. It was Danny's first recording. He loved the experience, loved the process of making music and having it recorded.

## LEAD SINGER JIMMY MELTZER

Back in the days of The Story Tellers, I used to go by the name of Jimmy English. It sounded so much better than Meltzer, you know. Plus the British Invasion was going on and it just sounded good to me. The moment I heard Danny play, I knew he was the real deal. None of us knew Danny before he joined the band. He wasn't a known musician in Jersey rock circles. It was like he had come out of nowhere and just blew us away.

We rehearsed pretty much every day before we did our first gig. Danny would come all the



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL WOLF



way from Flemington. He was completely dedicated to the band and the music we were making. We played covers—some soul music, because Chinnock loved artists like James Brown, Motown, Otis Redding—and we did originals, too. We called what we played “white soul rock.” Whatever Chinnock threw at the band, Danny responded musically—that really made our sound. The musical base was Danny and Billy. Those two created the foundation for the band.

We opened for the Lovin’ Spoonful, Vanilla Fudge, and other big bands of the time. We had some momentum, we certainly had the musical ability, but we didn’t really have management. That was the one thing that held us back. When Danny made it big with Bruce and the E Street Band, I wasn’t surprised. There was no question concerning his talent or his commitment to music. He was a lot further than most of us.

### BASS PLAYER DAVID BUDIN

I joined The Story Tellers at the tail end of the band. The group needed a bass player, so I said I’d play bass. At the time, the band was making pretty good money. My first gig with the band was one of its last going by the name The Story Tellers (the band would then call

itself The Gift). We played a hotel in New London, Connecticut. We all drove there from Jersey in Billy’s car, which is where I met Danny for the first time. I hadn’t rehearsed with the band at all. We figured we’d go up to New London a couple of days early and I’d learn the arrangements to the songs the band did. All of our equipment, except our instruments, had gone up before us, so we figured we’d drive there, get the owner of the hotel club to let us rehearse, and we’d be fine. Except that there was no one around when we arrived, and no one showed up for two days.

So we rehearsed in our hotel room with electric instruments that weren’t plugged in and Danny telling me what he’d play in this song and that one. The first time I ever actually heard The Story Tellers was the first time we walked onto this hotel stage and played the opening song of the set.

How funny was Danny? One of the songs we did that night, I think it was “Captain Soul” by the Byrds that required me to play my very first bass solo. Remember, I’m just learning to play bass, but it’s my turn to solo, so I get into it. I start moving my hands up and down the fret board and it’s sounding really good. I say to myself, “Wow, this bass thing is really easy.” Just as I’m saying it, I look out of the corner of my eye and see Danny laughing hysteri-

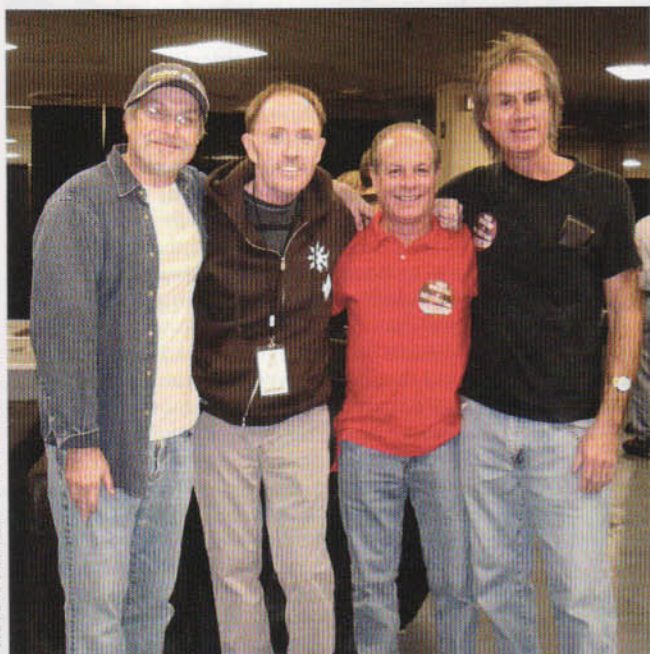
cally. Then I realize what he’s laughing about: he’d turned off the volume of my bass amp and was playing the bass solo on his keyboard. Looking back, it was pretty funny. But while onstage, I was horrified.

That very same night at the hotel, we were just hanging out in Danny’s room and he tells me that there’s a great view of the water or something out on the ledge. He says that I ought to go out on the ledge to see it because it was just amazing. So I take the bait and climb out the window to see this view. Suddenly, I see Danny close the window and lock it, and there I am out on the ledge of the hotel in the middle of the night and I can’t get back in. Inside the room, Danny is laughing hysterically. I look in and he’s pretending to read a magazine on the bed. Well, it’s March, the wind is blowing, I’m freezing, and Danny is completely ignoring me. It seemed like two hours that I was out there, but I’m sure it was not that long. But then again, maybe it was. Danny could let a practical joke really stretch out.

After the demise of The Story Tellers, Danny Federici and Billy Chinnock played together in the Downtown Tangiers Rocking Rhythm and Blues Band, which included drummer Vini Lopez and bass player Garry Tallent. Short-lived, but historically important, the band included three future members of the E Street Band and featured a R&B flavored sound that would flow through other Jersey Shore groups, most notably the Bruce Springsteen Band.



The first record Danny played on, from 1966.



The Story Tellers reunited after Chinnock's death, backstage at Madison Square Garden on October 18, 2007 (L-R): Lerner, Federici, Meltzer, Wolf.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BILLY WOLF; 45 COURTESY OF BILLY SMITH; BUTTON COURTESY OF LARRY LERNER



# ON E STREET



On the Born to Run tour in Dallas, TX  
September 16, 1975.

BARBARA PYLE PHOTO

## INTERVIEWS BY CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS

**Backstreets:** Let's talk history. You played with Danny even before Bruce did.

**Garry Tallent:** I've known Danny a long time. We met when Danny was in the Story Tellers, with Bill Chinnock.

We've been talking to the Story Tellers for this issue, actually. And I'm hoping you can take us through the permutations that led to the E Street Band.

Well, there were a few big bands from New Jersey at the time. The Critters had a few hits. And the Story Tellers were a big local band, really popular, they had a regional hit called "Cry With Me." That's

when I met Danny—he was actually just a few months younger than me, so I'm sure he was the youngest one in the Story Tellers as well. I didn't really get to know him well at that point—I mean, we met, and that was kind of the end of it. Then there was The Gift; he also had a band called Banana Breath at one point. So I was aware of him, but it wasn't until a few years later that I actually got a chance to play in a band with him.

I was a fan of the Downtown Tangiers Rockin' Rhythm & Blues Band, which was Billy Chinnock and Danny from the Story Tellers, Vini Lopez, and Wendell John.

They'd done the Electric Circus tour, and I saw them play in Jersey. They were a great band. I saw them several times.

**So this is probably '68 or so?**

That sounds about right. And at some point, I got together with Bill and Vini and Danny, and they decided that they wanted me to become the bass player in the band. Wendell John was the singer/bass player and was a really talented guy. I was a fan of Wendell's. I thought he had a great voice, and they said, "Well, we want him to be the front man and we want you to be the bass player," and I said, "Well, okay, great! I love this band!" So I rehearsed with them, got all the songs down, and we had a gig in New York City.

I got to the gig, and to my surprise, no one had told Wendell John of this change! [Laughs] He was there, and he's all ready to play bass—you know, a normal night with the band—and found out that all of a sudden he was the front man and not the bass player. Well, that didn't go over very well with Wendell, and I don't blame him.

# GARRY



But we actually did the gig, and that was it. Wendell, of course, had nothing to do with them anymore, and so I played one gig with that band, and that band broke up.

Shortly thereafter, we were all kind of scrambling to start new bands. Danny and I had spoken about re-forming a band that I had had before with Vini.

Danny is the one who took me to the Upstage one night. I guess Bruce had come in one Saturday night—I must have had a gig somewhere else, and I didn't see it. Danny said he heard this guy come in and sit in, and that I needed to come in and hear this guy, that maybe we wanted to get him in our band. So I did. I sat there at the Upstage with Danny and heard Bruce perform for the first time—first time I heard him—and he was great! We both said, "Hey, this guy's got it." We basically said, "We need to start a band with him."

And so Danny and Vini actually did that. They asked Bruce to join a re-formation of the Moment of Truth, as far as I remember.

#### **The Moment of Truth, that was your band with Vini for a little while?**

Yeah, that goes back to high school. That was Rick DeSarno, Vini Lopez, Tom Wuorio, and myself. That was the band we had basically out of high school, we started playing the Student Prince and various clubs in Asbury. So yeah, that goes way back. I think Vini was deciding that he wanted to use that name and start that band again, because it had a good reputation around the Shore. But of course, Vini and I, we were always fighting over something. Around that time, we were in the middle of some big battle, so I said, "I'm not involved in this."

So as far as my playing with Danny, that was the one and only gig that we actually did together at that point.

#### **That's it? Just one with the Downtown Tangiers band?**

Yeah! After that, actually, Danny and I started putting a band together. I always liked the idea of two keyboard players, the piano and the organ. I was always a fan of Spooky Tooth and Procol Harum, bands with two keyboard players—it was always a great sound to me.

And so I started the band... oh, now I remember what the fight with Vini was! It was that I was starting this band and I didn't ask Vini to be the drummer. I asked another guy—Johnny "A," Johnny Arntz—to be the drummer in that band. But then Danny didn't like the idea of another keyboard player—Donnie Lowell was gonna be the piano player, and Danny was gonna be the organ player. And Danny got mad at me because I wanted two keyboard players. Anyway, it was all silly. It was a lot of silly stuff.

But Vini and Danny decided they were going to restart the Moment of Truth, and then they wound up getting into this great band together called Child. That was the

beginning of Bruce and Danny playing together. I guess that band was a couple of years, and then it kind of morphed into Steel Mill when Steven [Van Zandt] joined the band as the bass player.

#### **Right. And it had been Vini Roslin on bass before Steve?**

Yes. Vini Roslin was from the Motifs. That was another band that had—not a hit record, but a local, a regional hit record ["Molly"]. The Motifs were a very, very big band in Jersey. Their lead singer [Walter Cichon] was killed in Vietnam, and that was kind of the end of that—and that's where Vini Roslin came from. And when he left [Child], I guess at that point it became Steel Mill, and it was basically the same people except for Steve replaced Vini on bass. That's how I recall it.

#### **Was Glory Road what you were doing at that time?**

I had Glory Road at the same time they were doing Child. Billy Chinnock and myself got back together and started Glory Road, and we had a keyboard player named Danny Mansolino, who was just a wild man. Finally we couldn't stand him anymore, and that's when I met David Sancious at the Upstage. The very next day, I took David to rehearsal with me, and he joined Glory Road.

#### **How did you and Sancious wind up sort of converging with Steel Mill—and with Danny—for the next phase?**

Well, I guess it was around the end of 1970, Bruce decided he was expanding Steel Mill. He was going to start a new band, and he asked David and myself to join that band. I was playing with Clarence [Clemons] in another band called Little Melvin & the Invaders and so... [laughs] it's very complicated. I'm trying to keep the timeline straight in my head—it's hard, because we had so many different bands at that time. I had bands going with Steven, and Southside, and also Little Melvin was actually out there working, so I was making my money with Little Melvin. And I was also playing with a band called the Jaywalkers, doing some clubs.

#### **Wasn't Steven in the Jaywalkers as well?**

Yeah, I brought Steven into the Jaywalkers. Playing

piano! He needed a gig, and it was just a club band, so Steven came to play with Jaywalkers for a while. After that stopped, the guy who ran the Jaywalkers was a record producer and I played on a record for this fellow named Mike Moses. That record was getting some airplay out in Kansas City, and we were about to take off on tour to promote this record when Bruce called—he wanted me to join this new band he was starting. And so I bailed out of the trip to Kansas City the night before we were supposed to leave and went for that band.

So Danny was basically the one that was left behind. Danny Federici and Robbin Thompson from Steel Mill were left behind when Bruce started the new band. So it was Vini [Lopez], Steven switched to guitar, Bruce, and the new members were David and myself. And then from there we added horn players and girl singers and became "the big band."

It was January of... 1971. I was married in '72, so I remember that by then we'd already been going for a while. So yeah, it was January of '71 that we started rehearsing the new band. And in the meantime, Steel Mill had a couple more gigs—they had to finish up. We rehearsed about six months before we actually performed as the Bruce Springsteen Band. We called



Danny in Steel Mill, 1970.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BILLY SMITH





it "the big band," with the horns. Danny Federici was not involved in that—and then we all moved to Virginia, so Danny was not involved for about a year or so.

**What was Danny doing at that time, do you recall?**

I don't know, because I was down in Virginia and was working mainly with Steve and Southside and David in various different bands there. And Bruce took off for California to visit his parents, and it was around that time that he came to New York and got the record deal with Columbia Records.

**So meanwhile, you guys, it was the Sundance Blues Band?**

That's one of the bands we were doing, yeah. Then David and I went up to New York to do [Bruce's] first album. We did the first album, went back to Richmond to live, and didn't really hear anything else until Bruce called again to start touring. David and I had started this band in Richmond. We did an album together with Ernest Carter, which was David's first solo album, and David didn't really want to leave that. But I did. So I left David in Richmond and came up to Jersey to start touring with Bruce.

**And that's when Danny came in.**

Right. Danny came back into the band during the first album tour [in Fall 1972]. So really, that's the first time that I started playing with Danny on a regular basis, when we started the five-piece band which became *that band*, that started touring behind the first album. And not too much later, David came back into the fold [in Spring 1973], and that's when we first had the two keyboard players that I'd always wanted.

**Was that something that you had sort of pushed for? Or did that just happen independently?**

I don't remember. I always liked the idea, and I always loved the way David played, and I always wanted to get him back in the band; but I always loved Danny, too. It was just serendipity, I think. Whenever the idea of having two keyboard players would arise, I would certainly encourage it. I'm not gonna say it was my idea, but I always liked the idea. And it worked out. I don't think Danny liked it much, but because David *did* do the album, he kinda went with it. Anyway, that's when I really got to know Danny.

**What was Danny like in those days? As much of a troublemaker as Bruce makes it out?**

He was *spontaneous*. As spontaneous as his playing was, that was also truly his personality. He just did what he felt like doing when he felt like doing it. He was maddening sometimes, but he was Danny, and he was a great player, so that's just kinda what went on.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BILLY SMITH

**Top:** A 1967 Downtown Tangiers autographed photo, Danny in the upper right.

**Above:** Danny & Bruce outside Pandemonium, when Child opened for James Cotton in 1969.



In terms of his playing, Bruce has said that Danny was the most natural musician he's ever played with. Does that ring true for you?

That's exactly it. Danny had the combination—well, he had perfect pitch. He was born with perfect pitch, and he just had natural musical ability. Plus, his parents realized it early on and encouraged it, and from the time he was very, very young, he took music lessons. So on top of being naturally talented, he was well educated. He knew classical accordion inside and out. He was a prodigy.

So yeah, he was just a really terrific musician—way beyond any of us, really. He could play his instrument. I guess the first band that he actually played organ in was the Story Tellers, when Billy Chinnock auditioned him—I was told this, by Billy—he could be in the band, but not playing an accordion, he had to get an organ, a Leslie! [Laughs] And Danny's parents went out and bought him a Farfisa organ and a Leslie, and he was in the band! And that was the beginning of his rock 'n' roll days, really. I guess he was about 14.

So like I say, he had perfect pitch. I mean, he didn't really need to know the material to play. He just played. He just had that ability. His natural ability, and his education in music, and his perfect pitch... you know, we would kinda get angry with him sometimes, because he didn't bother to learn the songs. But the fact is, he didn't really need to know the songs! He played so effortlessly that he just always was able to fit in, because he would just listen and play. Up to then, I had never known anybody like that. It was awe-inspiring.

And beyond being a natural musician, he was a well-educated musician. We were all pretty much self-taught, and I didn't really know anybody like Danny. But the funny thing is, he kind of always played that down—because I think rock 'n' rollers were supposed to be dumb, you know? And so he'd never really play it up. He just always "aw shucked" all that accordion stuff.

It's funny, when Bruce has talked about Danny winning the Ted Mack Amateur Hour, for a while I thought he was joking. I thought that was just a little laugh he was having.

Oh, no, that's true. And he was a two-timer—he came back! don't know if he won the second time, but I know he appeared twice.

Oh, that's great.

Yeah, I know [laughs]. It almost seems like a joke, but it's really true. He was a child prodigy on the accordion.

You mentioned Danny not being crazy about having a second keyboard player in the band. Was there a moment when that shifted? I mean, that twin keyboard lineup is one of the hallmarks of the sound at

this point. When Roy came in, was Danny still chafing at that a little bit?

Well, if the truth be known, yeah, he was never too crazy about it. He kind of didn't get the need for the two keyboards. I guess part of it, too, was the fact that he hadn't played on the first album. And he really didn't do a whole lot on the second album because, again, Dave did a lot of keyboard work—organ and piano—on the second album.

And on the third album, it was pretty much all Roy. Danny's not in the credits much at all on *Born to Run*.

Yeah, and I think that had a lot to do with... well, Danny didn't like it and kind of was rebelling. And rebelling in bad ways. Everybody knows that, at the time, he was... a partier, we'll say. And a lot of times he was really not there the way he should have been.

But I think in time, once the band became successful, then whatever was going on, we all embraced it. So he definitely came around.

I also think that his accordion was part of the reason that he was able to shine on his own. Even though Roy played accordion also, that was Danny's instrument, and he really loved to play it—and so he got the spotlight, and that was very important to him also.

On stage, it seemed like Roy and Danny were very good at finding room for each other and working together—maybe just intuitively, I don't know how much of that was communicated about overtly, but it certainly came across in the performance that there was space there for both of them and they both knew where to go.

Yeah. I attribute that a lot, like I say, to Danny. The fact that really, a lot of times, he didn't really know the songs completely. He didn't know the changes. But it didn't matter. He was such an intuitive player, he could always find his spaces. That's what he did, and that's what he did so well.

What was your relationship like with him?

Well, we used to party pretty hard together. I'm no saint, either. We used to get into a little trouble, the two of us in the early days...

You gotta tell me one of those stories.

No... no, I don't.

Okay. Fair enough.

But actually, after that, we really became very, very close. He and his ex-wife had a lot to do with me and my wife being able to adopt our children. He and his wife helped us through the process and introduced us to the agency and all that. Our children are about the same age, and we went through that all together. So we became very, very close, you know?

But yeah, I can remember a couple of times being so angry at Danny, I wanted to strangle him—because he was just that kind of guy. He would just go off and do whatever he felt like doing and not really think about anybody else. And you know [laughs], everybody would get mad at him and yell at him or whatever, and then he'd do it again the next time! So it's always been a family. I've got six brothers and sisters, and it's the same thing as family. It truly is. Those relationships always wind up just getting closer after everything that you go through.

On this tour, I think the majority of audience members weren't aware that there was anything wrong with Danny and, as far as a lot of us could tell, it didn't affect his performance at all. He was really playing as beautifully as he ever had. So I think a lot of fans were really taken by surprise. Was it something that you all talked about or didn't talk about? Was it just kind of business as usual on the first part of the tour?

Well, we knew about the cancer. We knew that. And yet we all had great hope. And the hope really, especially after the experience in Indianapolis, it was so inspiring for all of us because we just really thought that he was gonna beat this. He was trying some new treatments that were being effective, and we were all very hopeful. And Indianapolis, he came out... it was hard for him, but he had a great time, he looked great, he sounded great, we were all very excited and very up, as he was, and it gave us that much more hope.

It's not like we knew it was inevitable. We all had a lot of hope for him beating this. And then it got in his brain. It happened real fast after that. So we really didn't have time to think about it too much. By the time I got to New York to see him he was still responding—and within days, he wasn't anymore. So I guess we can be thankful that he didn't suffer long.

It was a tough fight, and he fought it. It was just a formidable opponent, and like I say, once it found its way into the brain, there was really no stopping it. Melanoma is a very fast-growing cancer. It's very easily treated if it's caught early. Unfortunately, it was far along before they realized that he had cancer, so it became a much more difficult fight. But yeah, we all had hope. We really envisioned... you know I talked to him, and he really wanted to come to Vancouver and pick up the tour from there. Then we talked again and he really wanted to but he couldn't, wasn't feeling up to it. And that's about the time that he really started to go downhill.

I'm so glad that he got that last performance in Indianapolis, a chance to come back and bask in the spotlight one more time. How did that come together?

I have to credit Max, because he really just stayed after Danny until he finally said,





"Yeah, yeah, let's do it." So Max is the one that just wouldn't give up on the idea of having him come out there. We all knew that it would do him a world of good—and it did. It did. He had a couple of great weeks afterwards, and he was just feeling great about it. We really didn't know at the time how important that timing was, but looking back.... We were very fortunate, because we all loved the hell out of having him back that night. It was very important to all of us, including Danny.

**What have the shows been like since for you? Certainly in Florida there were some intense, emotional shows, not to mention seeing that film montage, which I guess you saw for the first time at soundcheck?**

Yeah, we were all quite shaken over it. I mean, that day, I'd come from the burial, and I knew that the show was going to be difficult to do. And then we saw the montage that Thom [Zimny] put together, and of course, we were all a wreck.

I can't describe my feelings. It was very difficult for all of us to even see. It's all those

things: It was wonderful to see him that way, but at the same time it was just very, very sad. We still hadn't totally accepted... well, I *thought* I had. I thought I'd accepted that he wasn't coming back. He was gone. I deal with it every day. Every day I kind of say, "Well, what can we do? How do we get him back?" It's the first time I've been through anything like this.

**How's Charlie doing? It seems like that's got to be the most difficult job in the world right now.**

Charlie's doing great. Charlie is a superior musician, a superior person. He's in a very difficult position, filling in, and it's probably even more difficult now. He's amazing. He's just a class guy, and doing a great job. I think he misses Danny *[laughs]* even though he didn't know him, because he's just caught up in being with us all the time. I think he feels it, too. He feels all the emptiness, and it's a hard void for him to expect—we don't expect him to fill it. Like I say, he's filling in and, where do you go from here? Nobody even thought of that...

but we love and appreciate Charlie for helping us go on.

**Bruce is bringing so much new stuff into the set, and it's been impressive that Charlie can keep up it. It looks like he's got a big book of songs on top of the organ...**

Maybe Bruce is just seeing if he can handle it like Danny: if he doesn't have to know the songs to play them! "You don't know the song, but play it anyway." *[Laughs]* And Charlie's doing it. He's a great musician. He's got the experience, and the education, and the years. He's a great musician and we're very fortunate to have him with us.

**But it doesn't mitigate the loss.**

It's hard to find words. A lot of people you're going to speak to are a lot more eloquent than myself. But I'm gonna miss him. He was my brother, and we found each other, luckily, when we were teenagers, and kind of lived through a whole life. And it's been an incredible journey. I learned so much from him, and I'm just gonna miss him and I guess I always will. ➡





**Backstreets:** You were telling me that you've been listening to E Street Radio lately.

**Max Weinberg:** I generally don't listen to radio very often, but I've been back at the Conan show now, so I've been driving in and I'll get a chance to listen to Sirius occasionally. They play a lot of concerts. And what really comes across is what a *rockin'* fiery musician Danny was, and what a great organist he was.

**The term that seems to keep coming up is *instinctual*.**

Well, yeah, he was that, but he was also very technically proficient. And instinct is one thing; it only gets you so far. It usually ends up that if you don't have the chops to back it up, it will trip you up. But Danny never made a mistake.

He could really—a lot like Garth Hudson of the Band, and Felix Cavaliere, they took a very static instrument and made it unbelievably organic. In other words, with a drum, for example, because it's a percussion instrument, it's infinitely responsive to pressure. A Hammond organ, you've got to

work the pedal. You press a key, you've got to know how to work the draw bars. It's not like playing the piano; organs grew out of being... they were the whole orchestra, and Danny was a guy who really knew his way around that.

And of course his signature glockenspiel sound is on more songs than I ever even realized, actually.

**When did you and Danny meet? Basically when you joined the band?**

Right, I joined the band in late August 1974. And right away I was impressed with everybody in the band. But back in '74 we got this blue GMC motor home, the "blue bus" as we called it, and we used to go to shows in that, and stay in it—we'd actually live in that thing. And as I said at the service, Danny and I shared a bunk. It was a table that folded down to sort of a—not a bed, really, but a table with a foam pad on it, in the back of the bus. In the band at that time was Bruce, Clarence, me, Danny, Roy, and Garry. Roy and Garry shared one at the front. So when asked about it, I've been able to recall that I slept with Danny long before most of his wives did.

But joking aside, it does make you close; we slept head-to-toe, we got very close. Through the 34 years that I was with Danny, I grew to be deeply affectionate of him. And I don't think there was a week gone by in the last 20 years where I didn't talk to Danny about something. We were deeply, deeply close.

**I had no idea you were in that kind of touch—I had the impression that you guys weren't in contact much when you weren't on tour.**

Well I've somehow stayed in touch with everybody in the E Street Band when we weren't playing. Much more so than when we were playing. I'm not quite sure why that is, but whether it was Roy or Steven, Clarence, Garry... We always spoke, all the time. Off tour, I lived near Bruce. I can only give you my version of events, but Danny in particular was someone who I had a constant relationship with. We had a continual conversation the whole of my experience and years of the E Street Band.

So it was a lot of phone calls, and a lot of staying in touch that way. There were, I guess, certain things that I could bring to Danny that I thought I was uniquely qualified to do, and the same thing with him and me. We had a lot of very long-lasting experiences. The kind of stuff that forges those bonds.

**Those experiences being touring together, or outside of that?**

Oh yeah, something totally different from touring. In the early days we were together a lot, but now we go to the show, and your relationships and your daily interaction is informed by all the years you've spent actually touring. We don't really tour anymore.

We go out and play and come back. It's a little different.

When you're touring, particularly in the early days, you're eating together, all the time. You're stopping at four in the morning at a rest stop to have a meal. So you're together all the time. If you stay together long enough and you have any degree of longevity in your career, from my experience... well, we're a lot older and we have families, so our lives don't revolve around being musicians. You know what I mean?

Steve had a great line. Somebody sent me an interview with Steve, and he was asked about how he's doing his radio show, and his record label, and this and that, and he's so busy, and "what do you do in your spare time?" And Steve says he plays with the E Street Band. I thought that was really a great comment.

My life, like most people my age, centers around both my work and my family. And whenever Danny needed either a kind word or a helping hand, I know that all of us were so responsive. I took it as a sign of my personal relationship and friendship with Danny that—he didn't have an easy time of things, generally, over the last 30 years, and if he needed someone to talk to in the middle of the night, he knew he could just call me.

**My understanding is that you were pretty instrumental in getting him to Indianapolis. Can you tell me that story?**

[Laughs] Actually, I think my wife had more to do with it than I did. It's not for me to judge how much or how little I had to do with that, but I had seen him quite a bit before that and talked to him a lot. I had been talking to him ever since he ended his treatment in late January, at a time when he was very up. Then it kind of reversed, and I thought it would just be a great thing for him to do—and beyond that, it would be a great thing for the rest of us. I thought that the E Street Band could really use it. I think other people had mentioned it to him, but he'd been very resistant to the idea.

I've had quite a bit of experience, as a lot of people our age have, with losing people to this insidious disease; I just thought, well, here's an opportunity. We were going to have dinner anyway—he and his wife, Maya, and me and my wife, Becky. So we met in New York—we were still on tour, so I went to New York and Becky met me there. It was a howling rainstorm this particular night. And she came up on the boat from where we live, there's a ferry. It was really high seas and just a nasty ride.

During our meal I was saying that I thought he would really, really enjoy coming out and playing. At that point he didn't really think that he had the physicality to do it. Having dinner with him, I could tell he was certainly advanced. He was weak, and he wasn't sure... the last time he played in Boston he was strong, relatively speaking. I said, "Well, you get inflated by the audi-



Danny's last night on stage  
in Indianapolis, IN  
March 20, 2008



ence. Things you think you couldn't do, when you get out there...." You know, a big part of what we do is being pumped up by the audience. And of course by the music.

Then he was thinking about it. I said, "Danny, come up! Look, play with one hand if you have to." He's got more musicality in one hand than most people have in both. He said, "Well, maybe one song."

As his wife said, Becky and I could have sold ice to the Eskimos that night. We really did a hard sell. So afterwards, we were walking back to his townhouse in New York, and he said, "Well, Max, you've always been a hard sell with me, but it's really your wife. She braved the Atlantic Ocean to come up here and convince me. So, for Becky, I'll do it."

And Danny, as I said in my words at his service, Danny was someone who really enjoyed the attention and whatever bit of profile came with being in the E Street Band—and certainly the traveling conditions. So I said, "Well, Danny, we'll send a helicopter for you instead of a car." Danny was always such a gadget freak and an aviation nut, I knew if I said that, that would be the sort of...

#### The clincher.

Right, he couldn't resist it! And he gets there, and he could have played the whole concert, he was so energized by doing it.

And really, I don't take credit for anything there, because I was just conveying the sentiment I was sensing from everyone, particularly in the dressing room. Nils, Steve, Garry, myself, Roy and Charlie share a dressing room. So he was quite the subject of discussion.

Someone in the early part of the second leg of the tour, a fan, had this great picture of Danny that they threw on stage. Steve

saved it, and he had it arranged—I don't think he'd mind me telling you this—he had it affixed in his road trunk. So when he opened the trunk, which has this big door—the thing's the size of a refrigerator, you've seen these things—when he opened it, this picture was there. So every night we'd go into the dressing room on this second leg of the tour, and we'd see this picture of Danny. So he was never, for a second, out of our thoughts during that time.

Danny was someone who played—you can listen to what I call his "interstitial improvisation." The stuff *between* phrases. He always had an ability to pop out of the mix with his little frills and things. But he had a lot of definite parts. As Bruce has said, Danny would be hard pressed to name any of the chords in any of the songs, but he knew the song. That's what everybody means by being an instinctive player.

But Danny—I mean, he never missed. He really never missed anything that he *had* to do; and he was constantly on the musical search for something *else* to do. He sat up next to me, so believe me, I heard him really well.

#### How difficult do you think it was to coordinate two different keyboard players in the band?

Well, they're really very different instruments in the band; Danny did his thing, and Roy's always done his thing, and was how the band was organized. They had two completely different responsibilities, musically.

Though I remember in the early days, like the mid-'70s, we spent a lot of time trying to figure out, sonically, where everybody should play. There were so many people playing, so you had to stake out your territory based on frequencies. Otherwise it

would just be muddy. Do you play low or do you play high? We focused on that a lot. Don't crowd somebody else's range. I really can't speak to it as a keyboard player, and obviously as a drummer it made no difference to me because I'm in the middle—I'm playing on the beats that people don't play on, necessarily—but I remember those discussions. The piano and the organ were both kind of high-pitched instruments, so yeah, Roy and Danny worked together very closely to coordinate their parts and to be aware of what the other guy was doing. And I don't think the world of rock music has ever seen as successful a dual keyboard presentation as the two of those guys.

So Danny was just a big, big, big part of that sound. And of course the half dozen shows we did afterward, for all of us and I'm sure the audience as well, took on much deeper meaning because of his absence, his permanent absence—and the video that Thom Zimny made, which really just is incredible.

#### It really is. That gave me such a lump in my throat the first time I saw it—and the second and third times, too.

Yeah, me too. Because that was Danny. Danny could be impish, he could be gentle, he could be hard. He had a full range of emotion. He had a tremendous devotion to his children, in different ways. He had younger children, who he and his former wife adopted—he had this newfound fatherhood that he got very later in life. And with his older son, Jason, they were always close. Jason grew up with Danny's parents, but they remained extremely close. I remember Jason as a little boy running around, and now he's a man, a grown man.

We got back from Anaheim, and I went right from the airport to see Danny—he had

JASON FEDERICI PHOTO



just checked into the hospital that day or the day before, and I went there. This was about ten days before he passed. He was in good spirits. He was still relatively strong, certainly alert, and we joked. It was, like, 11 o'clock in the morning—we flew all night, and before I went home I went over to see him. I've had, as I said, my share of experiences of people going through this. You get a sense of these things.

We had a wonderful band experience shortly before he passed that he was certainly engaged in, and his whole family was there, and the whole band was there.

**You guys played some music for him in his hospital room, is that right?**

Yeah. No drum set there, so I wasn't playing music, but suffice it to say that it was very special for everyone that was there. That afternoon—and that whole week, I know band members individually all spent a lot of time up there. My wife and I did. I know those of us who were in New York and New Jersey did.

Who knows what goes through your mind and your spirit when you're faced with something like that, but I have to think for Danny it was definitely being surrounded by those who love you and you love and with whom created something with that was... it's not really for me to judge, but I always sensed it was pretty unique, what we created.

**I think that's fair to say.**

I'm not as in touch with it as—I mean, I'm certainly in touch with the *creation* of it, but I can't view it as either a fan or an observer of it. I guess I'm too close to it. But you certainly can see it in the faces of people at night.

**And have you seen that there for Danny?**

I remember one thing. I like having my drums between me and the audience; I'll do anything on the Conan show, but you put me up on Bruce's stage and I'm very content and very happy to be at the back with the drums. Occasionally if I see that somebody wants a pair of drum sticks, I'll go up front and give do that, but... well, this one particular night, someone the whole night had been holding up this sign right in front of Clarence that said, "We (heart) Danny." You know, with a big red heart.

I forget where this was, but I know it was before I went back and saw him in the hospital.

The show's over and we're all lined up there, and I got out of the line. I went down there on that lower lip and I started pointing around to find out, who had that sign? Because it wasn't up. Whoever had it saw me doing that and raised it, and they passed it forward four or five rows to me, and I brought it home and gave it to Danny. His wife and son Jason immediately put it on the wall of his room.

So he knew that. He knew the sentiment of the fans of Bruce and the E Street Band's music. Right to the last; right to the end.

**After Boston, when the news went public, there was such an outpouring of sort of love and well wishes for Danny—even just here at *Backstreets*, we were pretty much bombarded by phone calls and e-mails from people just asking, "How do we let him know?" So I'm glad he knew.**

Oh, he knew. And when we had that dinner in New York, before he came out to Indy, I said, "Danny, when you walk on that stage, I don't care what's going on, you are going to be Dan Federici of the E Street Band, and you will *feel* it." And he walked out, and he got this huge roar—and he looked over at me. It was very moving, because he was able to hear that, as it turns out, one last time—that roar.

To me it shows that it's not just the night you're seeing us in 2008, unless you're a young kid. I met a guy the other day—NBC had this big event, and this guy was one of the major ad buyers. So I'm at this party, and this guy comes up to me, he's probably 60, and he's talking about all the Bruce concerts he'd seen before I got in the band.

So this is a guy for whom seeing a concert now is *completely* informed by all those other concerts, you know? What I got from him is that you really feel like you have a relationship with this group of individuals,



Orlando, FL  
April 23, 2008.



this group. The music, obviously. Bruce as a poet and a singer and a dancer and a bandleader and everything else he does. So this really caught everybody short—the fans, I think.

#### Absolutely.

I mean, I was with Danny the day after he had his first operation, which was about three years ago. And that was a shock to me. There but for the grace of God, was your feeling, too. We're all at that age. I mean, he was so young. He was 58 years old. That's young. It's a real sad thing that occurred.

For the E Street Band it really is the end of an era. No matter what else happens, it is the end of a particular era. It's not like somebody leaving the band voluntarily. It's not like when the band broke up in '89. This is the real deal.

#### Steve left, and then Steve came back.

Exactly. And this is a whole other thing.

**Coming back on and playing those shows in Florida right after Danny's service, I wonder what that must have been like. I'm sure it was emotional. How hard was it? Was it cathartic?**

Well, seeing the video was cathartic. Playing wasn't hard. I don't think anybody could say it was hard because that's what we do. That's what Danny would have done. We never took the stage where we didn't play hard and where we weren't informed

by—I may use that word a lot, but we bring our lives on stage. So maybe that's why we play so hard and so long. I don't know. It's real. So there was *never* this feeling of—I don't know, maybe what you're driving at is, like, too sad to play or something? Or just too broken up? No, there was never that. Because we have a mandate, we have a mission. We honor Danny.

In fact, we did before the show that night by invoking him and knowing that though his physicality wasn't with us, his spirit was *totally* with us. It may sound sort of... I don't know, *spiritual* or something...but it is *spiritual*! [Laughs] I mean, opening the show that way and then playing "Backstreets" where Danny was so important on that song—I mean, he was on every song, but that's a real stand-out organ song—on stage it's emotional, but it's not like "cracking up" emotional. You're there to do your job and play the songs.

Also, when you're doing those concerts, unlike most musical things—I hate to say that, but I've done a lot of different musical things—if you don't focus 100 percent it's not going to work. There's no room for anything else in your mind. Occasionally, and we all talk about this, a chorus will go by and you don't remember playing it. But you really have to stay actively engaged or you'll miss something.

That's not really the way it is with most acts at this level these days. You can get away with a lot more. We can't get away with anything.

We postponed those shows, obviously, because we had to attend to this big final heartbreak, which we did. And *that* was cathartic. By the time we got back to playing, we had all really spent a lot of time together. I give Patti and Bruce a real thumbs up, two thumbs up for their incredible engagement, hospitality, and the quality of strength and calm that they brought to those four or five days.

I don't know if anybody mentioned that, but they were champs. We all got together at their house every day for a few days. That's what you want to have happen.

**I was certainly impressed by his eulogy and the way he's handled everything from a fan perspective.**

Good. Me, too. Bruce is a word guy, and good at expressing himself for sure. Listen, there are a million stories we all have about Danny, and as Bruce said, most of them can't be told in public—which is part of the most endearing thing about Danny. As he liked to say, and as anybody who really knows the history is aware, he was the *original* member of the E Street Band. People have referred to me as the "long-standing" drummer of the E Street Band. Danny was the *original* member of the E Street Band, and there's a certain amount of stature that came with occupying that position.

Danny, of course, made it his life's work; he had a marvelous approach to his instrument and was, to me, just an indispensable component of the E Street Band sound. 🎸



Backstage in Indianapolis  
March 20, 2008

JASON FEDERICI PHOTO



# ROY

**"DANNY  
WAS SORT  
OF THE  
YIN TO MY  
KEYBOARD  
YANG."**

## **Backstreets: How are you holding up?**

**Roy Bittan:** Okay; I'm a little tired from these last couple of weeks, but I'm okay. Let me tell you, there's the normal tiredness from the show, but the emotional thing from Danny has just been gut-wrenching. I have to say, we've been having a really great time this entire tour... but since Danny passed away, the last bunch of shows have just been very emotional.

## **It certainly seems that way—and that's a powerful montage tribute to Danny.**

Oh, my God, it's incredible. You don't realize over the years how much footage was filmed, and then you watch 35 years pass by in fast-forward.

## **Well, it put a lump in my throat. It must've put one in yours.**

Every time I see it.

I'm particularly interested to talk to you about Danny, since you were his fellow keyboard player in the band—but also, since we've never really spoken, I'm hoping we can take a bit of a wider view, too. I'm curious to know what it was like when you first came on board with the *E Street Band* and first started playing with Danny. When Nils joined the band, he got up to speed by listening to a lot of bootlegs—but I imagine you couldn't really do that back in '74.

Yeah, that's correct. At the time, Bruce had that amazing collection of songs which became the *Born to Run* record. They weren't in their finished form, but I was presented with that material and had an opportunity to jump in and apply myself—and what an amazing collection of songs to suddenly have to interpret on the piano. So I consider myself very lucky in that respect. It was amazing moment in time to be able to embrace.

I had seen Bruce a number of times, and I certainly felt that I understood where he was coming from. My particular background was also the boardwalk and the beach and all of that stuff, because I grew up in Rockaway—which is really just the New York version of the Jersey Shore. So for me, I felt very akin to Bruce and his writing, and it felt almost second nature for me to work on those songs.

## **Where had you seen Bruce play?**

I was in a band at the time, and as it turned out, my band and *E Street* were trading sets at Max's Kansas City for a few nights.

## **What was that band?**

I was producing, actually—I was producing and playing with a woman named Niki Aukema. We had met in New York, and we made a record for Paramount Records. I had co-produced it and played on it and put together a band for her, and we were trading sets at Max's Kansas City. And for a few nights, I was watching Bruce—and I was just knocked out, obviously. So I spent a few nights tuning into him there, and then I saw him in Boston at Charlie's Place for a couple of nights. So I was somewhat familiar with his thing.

## **And a fan of [David] Sancious's playing?**

Loved Davey. I thought Davey was really a brilliant player, innovative, a style very different, in my opinion, from my own. And watching Bruce, I thought, "Wow, he's got a really, really great piano player"—you know, fantasizing, "Gee, I would love to play with this guy." And then, of course, strangely enough, I found out that I might have the opportunity.

## **You and Max coming in at the same time—were you at the same audition together? What were those tryouts like?**

Well, when I read the ad in the *Village Voice*, which Bruce had placed, I was very excited. I called up Mike Appel and made an appointment to go down to SIR rehearsal studios in New York. Max was not there at the time. Bruce was still auditioning drummers and piano players when I went down. He had gone through a lot of auditions, I understand, and there were a couple of different drummers I played with. I don't remember the first guy, but on my second time down there, when they called me back, I think I may have played with Max. I think they were zeroing in.

And so while I guess I met him when I was auditioning, nothing had been decided. When they did finally offer me the gig, at that point I got an opportunity to vote on the last couple of drummers who were up for it. Max, certainly for me, was the guy.

## **So Max owes a little bit of that to you then?**

Yeah! It was very short period—it was toward the end of all those auditions, so once they had locked in with me, they were ready to pick the drummer and move on.

## **Do you remember what you played at those auditions? Springsteen songs?**

We jammed a little bit. I think we played some blues stuff, and then yeah, we did play some Bruce songs. I remember that we played "New York City Serenade." And then I believe that he actually tried out a couple of the songs that wound up on *Born to Run*—we actually played "She's the One." I remember playing that song, with that great Bo Diddley beat, and trying to figure out, "Well, gee, what can I possibly play on the piano that would be exciting and in keeping with that?" And I kind of started to develop that piano part right then and there.

## **You describe your style as being very different from Sancious's, and obviously that's true; and with such a big stylistic shift between those first two records and *Born to Run*, a lot of that seems to come from the sound of your piano.**

Yeah, I think so. You know, Davey being as brilliant as he is, I was just more of a blues/R&B/rock keyboardist than he was.

## **As opposed to jazz.**

Absolutely. I think in his heart, he was a jazz player; and me, I was more in the Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Professor Longhair tradition. I was always more excited by and more interested in that type of from-the-groin playing than the jazz thing.

## **Once you joined the band, you guys played some shows pretty much right away. I'm wondering how you got up to speed on the live set, and what it was like to try to mesh so quickly—with Danny, with everybody.**

Well, I learned the songs, and I did actually have a couple live tapes to see what they were actually doing. And then I just went ahead and tried to carve my own space in keeping with what they were doing. I felt that the band was evolving, obviously.

It's a funny thing, because with Danny's passing, you realize first of all how unique





The E Street Band in their performance outfits, in the Oklahoma City Music Hall's backstage dressing room. September 17, 1975.

everybody is as a player. I mean, there are a lot of organ players out there; very few are coming from the place that Danny came from. He would evoke the boardwalk and rural America, as opposed to the classic guy who would play Hammond B-3 R&B organ.

So I really felt that I needed to just express myself as best I could in keeping with Bruce's songs. And I started to work on piano parts that fit with everybody's playing and in keeping with that, yet also move the band along in terms of it being an *ensemble*. If there was an element that was important that seemed to me to be somewhat missing before Max and myself, it was that while it was really interesting and fun, I think that Max and I really turned it into more of a rock ensemble. And that was a goal for me. Even though I tried to express myself and stand out in the pack, I think it's always been the group itself and the group sound that has always been important to me.

**Yep, I can see that shift there after you guys came into the band. And in terms of finding your space, as you say, what was communication like between you and Danny? Were things unspoken? Or did you guys have work to divvy up territory in a way?**

Well, first of all, the nature of the instrument, that's a big dividing point as it is. And then luckily, Danny and I were very differ-

ent players. Danny was sort of the yin to my keyboard yang. While I always had a strong emphasis on architecture and motif and transitions, Danny had a certain free flow to his playing that really complemented my kind of style. So there really wasn't any real head banging. It was just a matter of getting used to each other.

The other interesting thing was that both of us took accordion lessons. That was our first instrument, both of us, from the time we were very young—I started taking accordion lessons when I was 6 years old and did until I was 12 or 13. So I *understood* Danny's playing and where he came from, just from a real basic place. We had very similar influences, also. So it was an easy adjustment, I think, for him and for me. It just really worked. I mean, it could have been a disaster: it's one thing to have a couple of guitar players, but keyboard players tend to really define melody and chords. So it could have been a disaster had we had a similar approach to keyboards; it was just a blessing that we really complemented each other by nature.

**How was your training different? You both started off on accordion—and then what did you do after that?**

After I took accordion lessons for about six or seven years—I used to take lessons on 48th Street in Manhattan, at an amaz-

ing accordionist school, but the whole time that I was taking accordion lessons, we had a piano in the house. And I sort of just transferred whatever I knew about playing the accordion to the piano. Other than just learning to play the left hand on the piano, I just transferred what I knew musically and didn't really ever take piano lessons formally. When I got to college, I did study music for a period of time. I took some theory classes and some piano performance classes. But to tell you the truth, it really just gave me the *names* for certain things. I had already pretty much understood all of it just by experience. So that was it.

**Do you come from a musical family?**

My father played the piano by ear, and my grandfather, as it turned out, was a violinist. So I guess you could say that there are some musical genes—and I do believe that. I see it in my kids, too.

**So, we come to *Born to Run*, and you're all over that record, on both piano and organ, while Danny is not. Was that due to Danny being an "unruly citizen" at the time, as Bruce called it? Or something else?**

I don't have a very clear picture of why he wasn't there. I believe he did come in once or twice to play organ, and I don't think it was productive. And I don't really



know what his personal state was at that moment—he may have been an “unruly citizen,” I don’t know.

**And I don’t mean that as a euphemism for anything in particular—just from the stories he’s been telling comes the sense that Danny could be a real pain in Bruce’s ass.**

Well, I think that the real pain-in-the-ass stories were really from those early days. By the time I joined the band, there was a certain equilibrium that existed. [For *Born to Run*] I just know that it seemed that he wasn’t available or wasn’t able to deal with it, so at that point, Bruce just said to me, “Hey, okay... go for this,” you know, “Play the organ on this, do that.” And so I just went ahead and did it, not understanding what Danny’s particular recording role was. For all I knew, he didn’t play on the earlier stuff. It’s not like I was checking the credits on the records. In fact, I don’t think he played on some earlier stuff, on the first record, or who did what on the second. I don’t even really know at this point [laughs]. I really should go back and see!

So anyway, Bruce said, “Hey, we need an organ on ‘Jungleland,’ we need an organ on ‘Backstreets’” and whatever else it was, and I just went ahead and did it. I did, at one point, have a Hammond organ and played in a band when I was 16, so again, Danny and I had very similar experiences. We both took accordion lessons, we both played Hammond organ in a band for a few

years. But piano was, for me, always my primary instrument, whereas Danny was pretty much the organ guy.

**You even played the glockenspiel on *Born to Run*, I think.**

Not on “Born to Run”—Davey’s on “Born to Run.”

**Sorry, I mean on the album.**

Oh, on the album, yeah. I think I played all the keyboards on that album except for that one song. Crazy, huh?

**You playing organ makes me think about the times you and Danny have switched sides on stage occasionally—the Tunnel tour most notably, of course. But it never seemed like that took.**

Yeah, it was kind of strange. It felt strange. We did it, I guess, just to be different. But it always felt weird. It’s just one of those things: you get comfortable playing in a certain spot, and it felt strange to reverse like that. In the early days, we used to play on such small stages that there were times when my piano was actually facing the audience instead of turned sideways—I would have, like, seven feet of piano between me and the audience. It was kind of funny.

**Yeah, it’s bizarre to look at that Hammersmith video from ‘75 and see what a tight space that is...**

There you go! Boy, was that a fun thing to see. I was amazed. I remember watching

that, and I saw Max shortly thereafter, and he said, “Man, I can’t believe...”

You know, you hear tapes of us from years ago; but to see it, it really transported me back. And I have to say, we were really good back then! [laughs]

**And it’s funny, because that’s one of those shows that went down in history as not very good. But the proof’s in the pudding, and I think the video tells a different story.**

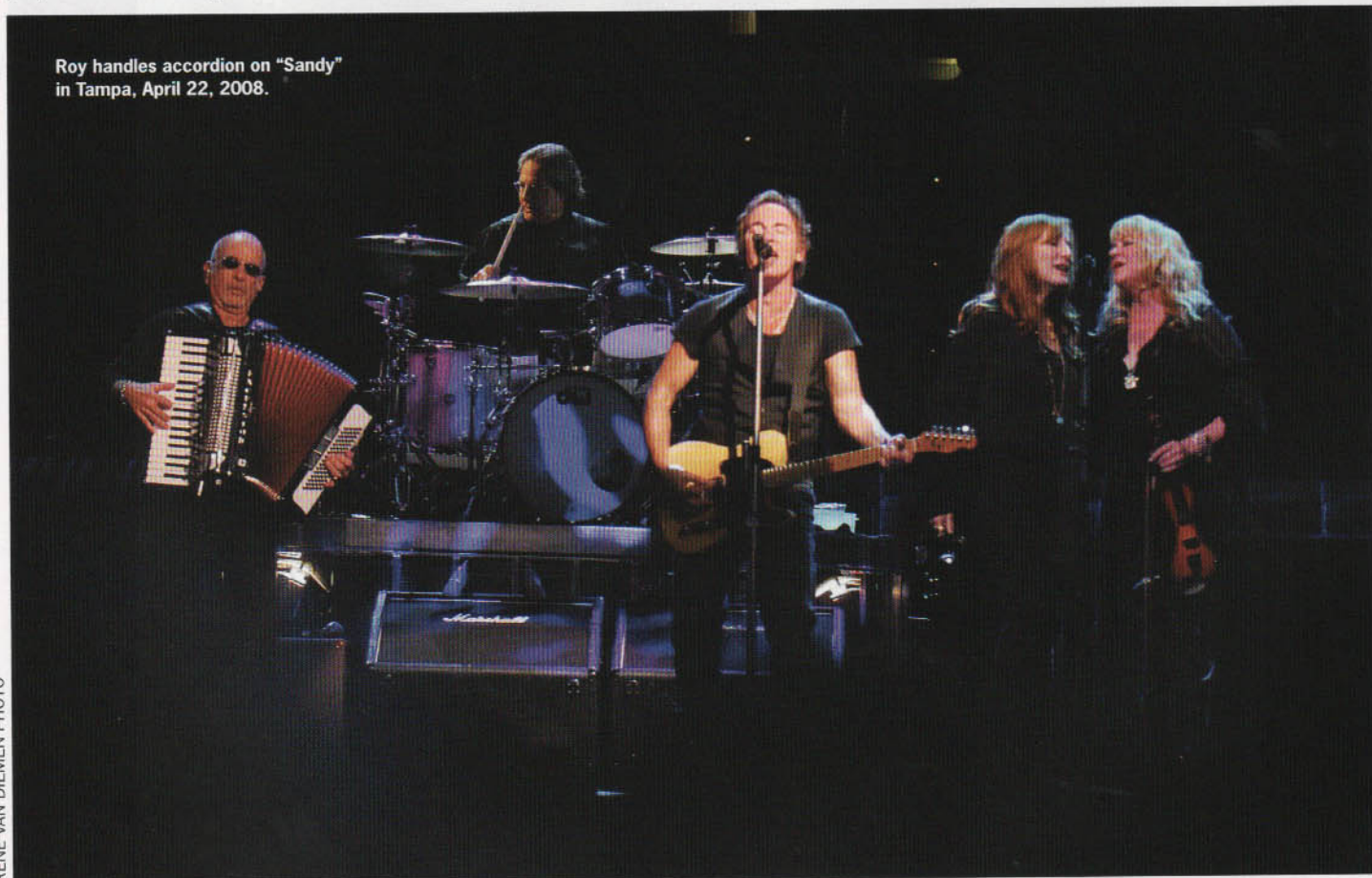
I think that reputation was more a reflection on the attitude that we had about it at the time. I think we were all a little freaked out. But like you say, the proof is in the pudding, and when you get right down to it, we really played really well at that show.

**I was surprised that that footage even existed—a little dark, but hey, it’s beautiful stuff. And I hear that Thom Zimny is working on some *Darkness* footage for the 30th anniversary release, so I can’t wait to see how that looks.**

Yeah, me too, and I understand there’s really a lot of footage from that period, much more than the *Born to Run* period, so it should be fantastic. I’m really excited. In fact, in the Danny tribute, there’s some of that in there.

**The Darkness tour has gone down as one of the real E Street Band high points, historically speaking. Would that be the case for you as well? When you look back,**

Roy handles accordion on “Sandy” in Tampa, April 22, 2008.







November 18, 2007  
Boston, MA.

where are the highlights for you in terms of the arc of the E Street Band's career?

Certainly *Born to Run* and *Darkness*. I have a particular affection for that period because it was very piano-oriented—certainly for me, it was an opportunity to really express myself in that context. And certainly the songs are incredible. So I do love that. I also think that *The River*... but you know, it's like children. Every one is different, and you have your own love for them, and you don't really have a favorite. I mean, I loved *The River*. The *River* period was amazing to me. *Born in the U.S.A.* was an incredible thing—how it came about, and all those songs—and at that point we shifted to some synthesizers, so that was an interesting period for me. But there's no question that the first couple—*Born to Run* and *Darkness*—there's an emotional thing for me about it.

You talk about getting to really stretch out on the piano during that time, and your "Prove It All Night" intro on the '78 tour is just one of those knockout things.

Thank you, yeah. We did a lot of extend-

ed intros or moments in songs, and that was always great fun to be able to sort of improvise during those sections. And, my personal take, it was just great for interaction between Bruce and myself. I would be accompanying him in a soft passage that was an improvisation, and he would do stuff, and I would react to it, and that was always really great. We used to do it in "Backstreets," we used to do it in "Prove It All Night," and various other songs. They exist on bootlegs, but unfortunately not on the live album.

I guess that's true, isn't it?  
Yeah.

Loads of bootlegs, though.  
That's right.

You contrast that with what the band's been doing lately, and part of the hallmark of the recent shows is just the way that you guys just barrel through from one song to the next, bang, bang, bang...

That has been a really interesting thing.

Bruce likened it to a ride on a roller coaster. You're sort of going one way, and all of a sudden you get thrown to the side and then shifted another direction, and I think some people don't quite understand the nature of that. I think that people are just used to, like, *finishing*. You should finish a song and then stop for a moment [laughs]. Just because that's the way every other band does it, you know? But I think it provides a continuity that... I don't think anybody has really kind of really done anything like that before live. And then to add in audibles is pretty wild.

You've really got to be on your game, right?

Yeah! [Laughs] You have to be, "Okay, where's he going next?"

The other night, we saw Bruce run around and flash ten fingers to everybody... Okay, I guess we're doing "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out."

Exactly. He generally mouths the words. Sign language works sometimes. Or sometimes he mouths the words and I go, "Oh,



my God, what is he trying to say?" I look at Steven and Steven looks at me or Garry, and we help each other.

**You mentioned synthesizers—the Born in the U.S.A. tour was the introduction of that to the band.**

Yes. Well, of course, it was really for the album.

**What do you recall about those sessions? A lot of fans wonder about what has come to be called *Electric Nebraska*: the E Street Band's take on those Nebraska songs. Does that stick in your memory?**

You mean the *Nebraska*...

**Recording the actual *Nebraska* songs—sessions where the E Street Band tried the songs that wound up solo on *Nebraska***

We rehearsed them, at least. In fact, we rehearsed a bunch of them in my house.

**Is that right?**

Yeah, I had a big living room with lots of glass, a really high ceiling, and we set up in there. It actually sounded really amazing in there, just because of all of the brightness of it. I think we tried a bunch of those songs.

**This is rehearsing for the sessions? Or for the tour?**

For the sessions. I guess Bruce was trying out material, and it was mixed in with a bunch of other stuff, really. I don't have much of a recollection of how we were trying to play them, but we were just doing them in typical band style. And then when we got to the studio—you know, he wrote so many songs for *Nebraska* and *Born in the U.S.A.* I mean, there was a tremendous amount of outtakes. So once we got into the studio, we went through a long period of recording, off and on, of just going in and working on songs.

And to get back to the synthesizer thing: synthesizers, at that point, were really being embraced by bands, and I think that Bruce felt the need to try and add different colors to the songs. I think he saw the possibility of being able to expand the palette. I certainly was into it. I had been playing around with some stuff and had a Yamaha CS-80, which was one of the great analog synthesizers at the time, and so we brought one into the studio. It was kind of shocking at that particular moment, because we are basically just a traditionalist band in terms of instrumentation. So the trick for me was to give Bruce the opportunity to utilize new sounds, but to do it in a way that would integrate the synthesizer into the band without losing the character of E Street.

**What was the key to pulling that off?**

We used a certain number of sounds on that record that were, I think, not typical of what you heard on the radio. They tended to be darker and more anonymous sounding—almost like an extension, to some degree,

of an organ, yet they did sound different enough so that there was a differentiation between the synthesizer and the organ. And once again, Danny's playing also allowed it to be different just by the nature of the way he played.

So things like "I'm on Fire" and even "Born in the U.S.A."... "Born in the U.S.A." was a great little moment: Bruce came in and played that song on the acoustic guitar. And I went over to the CS-80—there were these funny little sliding switches on the instrument, very inaccurate, and you would just move those things and come up with a sound. If by chance you changed them and tried to get back to that, you would have a really hard time getting the actual sound. But anyway, I moved these little things and started to play that riff. I had some vaguely Asian sort of sounds in my head, because I was thinking about the lyrics. Max heard it, started to play the drums, and Bruce was listening and said, "Okay, wait a second. Maybe this would be a great way to start this thing." So when you talk about the synthesizer, a great defining moment for me on that album was recording "Born in the U.S.A." The synthesizer really led the way on that song.

**I also want to talk about the '92-'93 period, when you were still playing with Bruce but with a completely different band, as well as co-writing songs together. How did all that come about?**

I had moved to California. I had moved to Los Angeles, I guess it was the end of 1987, fall of '87. So I was living out in Malibu when I got the call that Bruce was going to move on by himself. He was living out there also, and so... as upset as I was, I still said to him, "Hey, listen. You know what? We're out here..." After a while I called him up and we went out. I just said, "Hey, man, let's go out to dinner."

We went out to dinner in Santa Monica, and he was back over at my house after, and he said to me, "So Professor, what have you been doing?" We really were not talking about the band really or about music. We were just seeing each other.

And so he said, "What have you been doing?" I said, "Well, actually, I've been writing music and putting tracks together," because I had a bunch of connections in Los Angeles. I had been working with a lot of other people in L.A.: I worked with Stevie Nicks, I recorded with Bob Seger out there, and [Jimmy] Iovine was always asking me to do stuff. So I was putting tracks together, figuring I could write with other people. I had used a computer prior to that, so I had my little workshop set up in my little studio, and Bruce said to me, "Hey, let me hear something." I said, "Okay," and I went in the studio and booted everything up, and I played him "Roll of the Dice"—at the time, an unnamed track.

He sat in front of the speakers, and I could see he was very intrigued. And then I

played him a piece of music that turned out to be "Real World," and then another piece of music that turned out to be "Trouble in Paradise."

He said to me, "Hey, give me a cassette." So I blew off a cassette for him, and he went home that night, and I didn't think much of it.

**Because at that point, he had never really taken musical input from anybody, right?**

I think that's correct. I don't think he ever had. Maybe he co-wrote something with Steven for Gary U.S. Bonds, but certainly never for himself. Never for himself. But early the next morning the phone rang, and I picked it up and I hear this voice going, "Hit! I got a hit!"

I said, "Bruce?" He said, "Yeah, Professor... I was up all night. I wrote. I wrote to your tracks." I said, "You did what?" I mean, he had never called me this early in the morning. And he said, "Yeah—come on over!" At the time, he was also renting a place in Malibu. So I went over there, and he put on the cassette I gave him and sang lyrics to these three tracks. And I was just floored. I was really floored—it was pretty fantastic. So that's how I wound up writing those songs with him.

And, of course, I think what that also did was, he saw that he could work on songs using a computer to demo them—he could have a much clearer idea of what the songs could be and how to arrange them by using this new tool. Just as we had used the synthesizer in the '80s, the computer was a tremendous new tool that seemed like it could really be helpful to him.

And it was, in a great sense. Throughout that period, he'd come up with a song and he'd present it to me that day, and I would program a drum machine so that we had something to play to. Then he would sing and play the guitar, and I would play a keyboard bass and a second synthesizer—whether it was a piano or whatever sound it was—and then we would record that. We would play it a number of times, and we would just sort of develop a rough arrangement of it. That's how he worked on all of his new material during that period. It was really quite fun. We were like the two-man bands, you know?

**And who was walking him through learning the technical ropes of that? Were you guys just doing it yourselves?**

Well, I was doing the computer work. I would basically program the drum machine, get a beat going, and then I would record it into the computer. The program at the time was called Performer—it was pre-Pro Tools. It was really slow, and the computer would crash and all that early computer stuff, but that's how we would record, and then transfer to tape. So that was the modus operandi. It was actually an incredibly long period of recording and demoing songs. And then as



it progressed, we added [Jeff] Porcaro and Randy Jackson, and it turned into... whatever it turned into.

**Funny to see what has become of Randy Jackson since, as a matter of fact.**

It's amazing, isn't it? [Laughs] Randy is just a phenomenal, phenomenal bass player. But we were talking about the uniqueness of people earlier, and it's the same story. You can get people to play the parts, or they bring themselves to the party, and you realize, "Okay, yeah, this guy can play the same part," but it's not quite the same. It's just not the same. In a way, we suffered through that during that *Human Touch* period, because we did E Street Band material—and everybody was great. I mean, Zack and Tommy, everybody. The musicians were fantastic. But it just wasn't E Street.

**There was certainly a point there where I scratched my head, knowing that Bruce wanted to get away from the E Street thing, and I understood where he was coming from as an artist. But at the same time, as that tour went along, he kept being drawn back to that E Street sound but now trying to create it with different players who... it wasn't necessarily their thing, as good as they might have been.**

Right. I agree. He was drawn back to it, even though we had a lot of songs between *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town*, including a lot of stuff that didn't make it on the record.

It's interesting now, the last bunch of shows we've been doing, he's been pulling from his catalog stuff that we just really haven't played very much. You just realize, what an incredible songbook—all periods—and it is so beautiful to be able to just mix it all up. To play an outtake, something from *Tracks*, and then play something from *Darkness*, and then play something from *Magic*... we even did that electric version of "Tom Joad."

**Which sounded incredible.**

I have to tell you, I was knocked out. I was like, "Wow, that was really a spectacular version of it." As much as I appreciate what he did on that record, the tone of it and the solitariness of it, [the electric version] was just very powerful.

**Absolutely, and Tom Morello was great. It's funny to see Nils doing some stuff on the guitar now, like on "Prove It All Night." You can practically hear him saying, "This kid's good, but I can do that."**

Yeah, I know [laughs]. That's been amusing us also.

**But it's true, one of my favorite things about you guys and Bruce together is the ability to completely re-imagine songs, so powerfully. So whether it's "The Ghost of Tom Joad," or "Reason to Believe," bringing out the '92-'93 stuff and reworking that with the E Street Band, those tend to**

**be my favorite moments. Like the other night when you guys broke out "Souls of the Departed," I was just so thrilled to see some of that material finally come back into the set.**

The thing is, we could've really done the whole *Human Touch*, *Lucky Town*... those two albums, I think, would have been wonderful had we recorded them with E Street. It wasn't to be. But it was definitely E Street material.

**Exactly, and I'm hoping to get more—hoping to get "Real World," actually, which has held up as one of my favorite songs.**

Yeah, that's a beautiful, beautiful song. I think I actually prefer the slow version to the recorded version of it, just because I think it just makes the lyrics a little more meaningful.

**When you wrote that music, was it more akin to what Bruce has done alone at the piano? Or what wound up on the record?**

No, it was an up-tempo track, kind of like the record.

**Certainly his performance of it at the Christic [Institute] benefit, and then—did you catch the Devils & Dust shows? Is that something that you got to see along the way?**

Yes. I saw [the] Devils & Dust [tour], I saw Tom Joad. I saw Seeger Sessions, of course. What can I say? He has the capacity to do those things. They are amazing, they're wonderful, they're unique... but, for me, I can't help looking at it like, "Gee, I wish he would try that stuff with E Street."

**There's clearly such a range that the E Street Band is more than capable of pulling off, and yeah, I would love to see him stretch out a little more in that way, too.**

Yeah—so maybe he will in the future. We'll see [laughs]. You never know.

**Speaking of the Seeger Sessions, what's it like having Charlie Giordano up there with you?**

Charlie is a great, great keyboard player. He's a really terrific human being. It's not easy, as you can well imagine, to step into a group of musicians who have been together for 35 to 40 years, and he's done it in an almost seamless manner. He's very respectful of the music and of Danny's parts, trying very hard to fill Danny's shoes. I'm looking forward to him making it even more his own, but I think right now he's just trying to take care of what needs to be done, and he's doing an tremendous job. And that's why we're very lucky to have him, because he's been able to do that without stepping on the feelings people have for Danny.

**How does he differ as a player?**

Well, to answer that question, I can only judge him by the context in which he's play-

ing. I think that there's a lot more to Charlie than we're seeing right now, because he's trying to do a very specific thing. I think that he's very versatile, he's very knowledgeable and very capable, and I think that he's still ramping up to Danny's place in the band. He's still learning, every show. Right now, he's working to replicate Danny's parts, so it doesn't affect me. I'm still doing what I do—I'm not changing my parts at this time.

**He's working hard to fit in a particular space, right?**

Yeah, exactly. I mean, if I were to try it, if I were to change or modify stuff, then we're really changing the character of the arrangements of those songs. So all I can say is, he's a great musician, and he's doing an amazing job.

**But I know it's not easy for everyone.**

I have to say, I really miss... you know, my piano faces perpendicular to the audience, and I look up and I just really... Danny was directly in my sight, in my line of view. And on a purely emotional level and nothing else, I just really miss seeing the guy. When I think about him, I kind of picture him like that. I picture him looking over at me and smiling. And just emotionally, he's not there, and there's just a vacancy for me. There's a big hole—just emotionally.

I feel like I just lost a brother. It's really pretty simple. Even though we're all such different people in the band, and probably if we all met at some point in different places, we probably would not be friends. We're all so vastly different as individuals, with such incredibly different backgrounds. Yet I feel like I really lost a brother.

We had that early period up until Bruce disbanded in '89, and we came back in '99, and everybody came back together after ten years with a huge appreciation for what we did before, and a much greater appreciation for each of us as individuals, and much greater tolerance for each other and our eccentricities [laughs]. Let's face it, we really lived together. On the road—and certainly our life onstage is something that only exists between the nine people up there. You realize what an emotional attachment you've had to these crazy guys, you know?

**And that's the thing: so many fans, including myself, are sad over Danny's passing, and at the same time, I have to remind myself, well, if you think this is bad, imagine what it's like for people who really knew him, and loved him, and played with him night after night after night.**

Yeah—there's a bond that is created when you have that type of musical and emotional life for so many years together, and it goes beyond a familial connection. It's very powerful. Every night we do it now, and we think of Danny all through evening. Before, during, after. And I really think that that memory, and those feelings, will always exist for us. 🐾





"Danny was directly in my sight, in my line of view. And on a purely emotional level and nothing else, I just really miss seeing the guy."



# NILS

**Backstreets: When did you meet Danny? Were you acquainted with him before you joined the band?**

**Nils Lofgren:** Yeah, from a distance. I don't actually think we officially met, but way back in 1970 at the Fillmore West, Bill Graham had an "audition night" once or month or something where 15 or 20 bands looking for an opening act slot got to audition. Everyone would play 20 minutes, and my band Grin was there the same night Steel Mill was there [February 17 or 18, 1970]. I'd heard about Bruce, and of course we were on the same circuit in the East, playing clubs, but it was really the first time I came across Bruce in person. Danny was playing at the time.

Throughout the '70s, I would buy a ticket to go see the E Street Band, whether it was the Bottom Line in New York or the Roxy in L.A., the Sports Arena. I saw them in various places and would go backstage briefly and say hello. Usually it was just to Bruce. I might bump into the guys occasionally, but I really didn't know any of them. It was just a fabulous band that I admired and bought tickets to go see for inspiration, just to see a great band as I was growing up through the music industry.

So it was really not until May of '84, when I went up to Jersey to jam for a couple days with the band, that I actually got in a room with all of them, got to play and really experience much more of an intimate musical take on the E Street Band.

They were all great and friendly. Two days later, Bruce talked to them all and asked me to join the band. Of course, that was a month before opening night of the Born in the U.S.A. tour. So I was really wrapped up in the work, but every one of them, including Danny, was very open about any help I needed. And I needed a lot of it!

**And before you know it, you're on the road.**

And I wound up spending a lot of the tour standing in front of Danny on stage. So I could go up there; I used to walk up on his riser regularly and just hang out with him when I didn't have to sing. Danny just had his own unique, fluid style. One of the most naturally gifted, effortless, soulful players I've ever known.

In the early days—well, early for me, the Born in the U.S.A. tour—Danny used to have a giant S-4, which was a huge PA column. It was a very thick square, like a giant coffee table or something. He had it mounted on its back, and he had a metal grate built over it, so he was literally standing on the PA speaker.

**That's cool—so that was essentially his monitor that he was standing on top of?**

Right. And it was blowing up through your legs and over your body up into the sky. He had his two- or three-keyboard organ rig on two sides of it like a corner, a 90-degree angle. And he preferred to have his own monitor console, which he did—his own little mixer, so he could move the faders around depending on what he wanted to hear.

He was very gadget orientated, very technically proficient. Everyone talks about it, well before I met Danny. He would always have the latest phone or the latest camera, and he was always souping up his organ or his car. Whatever it was, he was always trying to soup it up. Give it some extra horsepower.

So it was fun—walking up there to hang out with Danny was always a great treat. It's probably the best I've ever heard the band sound, even though I think we are *playing* better as a band, and I think the sound and the audience has gotten a lot better the last couple tours. But as far as something on stage... First of all, you could really hear the clarity of what he was playing even better. There was the roar in the room, but with this thing, the sound was generating from the bottom of your feet, literally. So it was a very short distance to your head, and there was just a clarity mixed in with the roar: a very unusual warm, clear, bright, loud-as-heck, but very, very inspirational, pleasing, rich sound coming out of that floor. Out of the floor that he stood on. He'd always nudge my fader up a little bit so I could hear a little more of myself (because it is a large band—there's a lot of stuff going on all the time). I have fond memories of that.

**Was that just on the Born in the U.S.A. tour, or did he keep that thing going?**

I can't remember. He might have done

that for a while on the Tunnel of Love tour, also. At some point, and I don't think it was until the Rising tour, Danny moved over to the in-ear monitors. But in particular I remember that from the Born in the U.S.A. tour. He was up there groovin' and having a ball, and I could see why. The sound was extraordinary, and it was just an unusual thing. It was just Danny's way of making use of the lay of the land when you're on a riser. In our band it's Max, Roy and Danny who are stuck on a riser, stuck in one place, and this was a brilliant creation of Danny's to really make the most of monitors.

**Souping things up features in a lot of Bruce's stories about Danny—and his penchant for trouble, too.**

That's one of many sides Danny had—and of course a lot of those humorous stories are ones that by now we all laugh at, but there aren't a lot of them that I really participated in. There was the time when Roy and I missed the opening of the show in Pittsburgh, and Danny wound up having to play the opening of "Born in the U.S.A." with his "chopsticks" sound—which was a brutal sound to open that song on. But Danny was just doing his job; that's what he was asked to play. At the time it wasn't funny, but now it's pretty hilarious.

**What was your relationship with him like?**

Well again, because I wound up playing on Danny's side of the stage and going up to hang with him a lot, it was good.

After the tour ended in '85, I went and did a Flip tour, one of my own tours, and put out an album. By that Christmas I had been struggling again with... I loved to drink. I just had no desire to moderate much. And Danny was really instrumental in offering me some good sound advice about all the help that's available for recovery. It really was a great voice of reason and encouragement to give me some insight into that; it encouraged me to get some help, which I did, and I'm 20 years clean and sober.

That really helped me out a lot. I mean, I'd love to drink to this day—if I could drink safely, I would. I think it's the best medicine goin' [laughs], but it's just not a medicine that I can navigate in a healthy way, and I never really did, even though I loved it. So that was something else that I really was grateful to Danny for, because he gave me a lot of insight into that and really encouraged me to get some real help, which I did.

Obviously, it's just a brutal loss that Danny has just lost his battle with cancer. About five years ago a really close friend, Wade Matthews, who had been playing bass with me for years—same thing. He just was on the road, playing; he was real sick, he kept playing. He was almost unable to move except for the shows and the sound-checks, but he'd always pop up and play great. And then eventually we lost him.

Way back in the early 70's I got to make





DANNY CLINCH PHOTO

the first Crazy Horse album, and sadly after that record, Danny Whitten, who was the heart and soul of Crazy Horse, passed away.

**So you'd dealt with this kind of thing before, but the E Street Band really hadn't.**

Right. I think we've all lost musicians that are in our circle somewhere along the line, but this was an extraordinarily unique loss because of the history. For me, it's been 24 years. For Bruce it's been 40 years. For Garry it's been 41 or something. That's a long, long time to be with somebody, making music, and have to say goodbye to them on every level.

So it's been difficult—but hey, like Danny told one of his best friends to pass on to the band, he asked us to all go out there and rock on.

**I hadn't heard that.**

Pretty much on his death bed, he said to really a close friend of his, Richie—Rich Luster, who we've all been in touch with—he just said, "Tell all the guys to rock on for me." And that's what we're trying to do.

It's a great honor to be a part of something this powerful, and you also recognize how fragile it is. The two are separate. So

it really gives you a gratitude—which I felt like I had well before Danny got ill, but now that he's not with us, it just reinforces how precious opportunities like this are and how sacred they are.

Obviously you want to have a ball, and have fun, and all that, but I think it brings a maturity along with the fire that we all still have, thankfully, to do what we're doing. And hey, we're just lucky. We're blessed. It's a raw deal and a brutal new chapter without Danny, but the beauty is there is a chapter to navigate with a bunch of great musicians and a bunch of great songs and most importantly, massive amounts of people that want to show up and acknowledge the healing power of the music—which is a rare, extraordinary gift.

I mean, there are a lot of good musicians; very few of them get to be in a band of this caliber, with songs of this caliber, with a leader of Bruce's caliber, with all the tools, and a passion for *performing*—which is different than making great records and going to play to make a living. So we've been very blessed and lucky, and we try to focus on that, too, as we navigate the loss.

You get greedy, and you wish that yeah, we should play for another 50 years and

everyone dies in their sleep peacefully. But that's just not real life, and sadness is a chapter we're in now.

**How hard has it been to move through that? To get out there and play again?**

Well, I consider it a difficult challenge, but it's one that makes sense to navigate and get through. Even though the first few shows back were pretty brutal, it was a healthy challenge to have a show. The first night, some of the really emotionally cathartic choices that Bruce chose—like playing "Backstreets" without Danny, without an organ and with a big spotlight on the organ and accordion—let people know, myself included, just how serious of a loss it's been.

Then later in the show, moving Roy over to play Danny's accordion part on "Sandy" I thought was another beautiful choice. Not only doing the song as a nod to Danny—of course, it was one of his favorites—but also the move to relieve Charlie of that burden. He's done a brilliant job sitting in for Danny.

**I imagine you can empathize with him coming into the band at this date, and all the stuff he's had to learn.**





When I joined the band, it was a kind of a traumatic adventure for everybody. The big difference—the *huge* difference—was that Steve wasn't in any physical danger. He wasn't ill. On the contrary, Steve was alive, vibrant, healthy, and wanted to make a solo record and pursue a solo career—and he did, and he did it great.

So there wasn't that to deal with, worrying about somebody's health. It was just more of a musical thing, a challenge to all of us, and a challenge to me. Everyone was very friendly and open and helpful. I still remember that vividly. Everybody in the band was very free with their time, but there's still only so much they could do—because I was the one having to play the parts and integrate that with a different sounding voice, range, guitar, different style, and making it fit.

Charlie, I've let him know right out of the gate, as we all did, that hey, anything we can do to help... because listen, everyone went through that curve at some point, whether it was Roy and Max in '74, or even if it's just the guys learning a new album. Because making the record and presenting it in a live environment, those are two completely different things. And we all faced that at the beginning of this tour. So everyone's familiar with the unknown of contributing to a new batch of songs. Charlie's incredibly professional and has worked his ass off, but he also knows that we're all available if we can help out in any way.

And everyone including Charlie saw it as, "Oh yeah, I'll play with Bruce for a year, happy to sit in here...." Because you're living in the possibility that Danny will get cured and come back. Everyone had hope. Danny came back and played briefly, and even though he was too weak to do the whole night, he did play a couple spots and played well. And he was responding to treatment, so of course you keep living in the possibility that he's going to get well.

That being said, now we're in another chapter where we've had to say goodbye to him. And that's just a whole other head space, where you know that's not an option anymore, so you can't live in that possibility—which is the place I had found some comfort when Danny did not come to Europe, to start his more intense treatment to try to beat this cancer. So that's no longer available to us. Now you move into another chapter. And admittedly for me, it's been pretty difficult. I've been grateful to have the challenge of a show with the audience in front of us. It's just a great shift of gears and focus as you're navigating the reality.

#### **You're moving through it, right?**

Yeah, the best way is through it. But you can do that a variety of ways, and thank God—I'm just speaking for myself, but I'm very grateful that we *are* on the road, and that there are shows to do. We've been doing great shows since Danny took a leave of absence, looking forward to him coming

back. Now we're doing great shows knowing he *can't* come back.

You can't ever replace anybody. It's like when we lost Terry Magovern; you can't replace Terry. To me, he was like our father/brother of the whole friggin' Jersey scene and the whole E Street Band organization. That's my take on it. And I had my own thing with Terry; he was like a member of the family. Especially since we didn't work directly together, we just really had a very sociable, loving, familial kind of relationship, including my wife and son, who Terry was very kind to and loved dearly. He always had time for us. So that was another brutal loss.

And again, Terry was looking forward to this tour. And as painful as that loss was, and now Danny, I'm grateful Bruce has decided to move forward with the music. Because there's no real right or wrong. But after all, it's about spreading some healing, and that remains an incredibly powerful force through music—in particular, Bruce's body of work with this band. You either do it or you don't. So I'm very grateful he made the decision to continue on.

**I am, too. You're right, the shows *have* been great, and some of the songs take on new meaning with Danny gone, as good music should.**

This is my 40th year on the road, and I'm just finding a new level of gratitude. After my buddy Wade passed away... Inevitably,



every night you get to play becomes a little more special and precious.

You know intellectually that nothing lasts forever and nobody lives forever. But the music you *make* can basically last and live forever, and touch people forever, especially now with digital [preservation]: all these great old scratchy recordings from the earlier part of last century now are digitized. And for whatever you give up on sound quality in terms of analog or this and that, the bottom line is they're not deteriorating in a basement now, or in a lab in L.A. to be lost forever when the tape goes bad. They now have been stamped into some digital realm. There's a lot of good and bad that comes with technology, but to me that's one of the good things: you're never going to *not* be able to listen to Muddy Waters or Howlin' Wolf.

So, even Danny's work lives on. Hey, when I joined the band.... What do you do? You've got this body of work. What did I start with? I started with the guitar parts that Bruce or Steve wrote. And I go from there, and then I try to maintain the emotional integrity and content of the parts, and add my own bits to make them my own, but with the emotional content they need to maintain. That's what you do. That's what Charlie's doing. He's doing it great. I hear him navigating the music and starting to make it more his own, as he uses Danny's template and unique playing as his inspiration, all the parts that Danny produced formulating the basis.

**So, those parts... let's talk about what Danny brought to the band. You talk about him as a "fluid" player and a "natural" player. What does that mean, exactly?**

Well, it means that he had a very innate understanding of music... it was a very unique talent, more of an instinctual feel than... how can I explain it?

**Garry was telling me that Danny had perfect pitch.**

Yeah, he had perfect pitch, but there are a lot of people with perfect pitch who couldn't play as fluidly and soulfully as Danny. They're very separate things as gifts and talents. Perfect pitch is good, but it doesn't guarantee you're a soulful musician.

When I learn a song, I like to start with the roadmap. What are the chords? What's the arrangement? I like to have something on paper to look at, as a template to follow before I really start getting too involved in what I'm going to contribute. I'm pretty good, and that's my approach.

Danny—I mean, Bruce even said it—probably couldn't even tell you an entire chord progression to any one song; but he could play the whole song. He wasn't burdened by needing a little introduction or roadmap. He just heard the music around him.

Certainly, perfect pitch would help you know where to start. When I jam with

someone I'm like, "What key are we in? Just tell me the key and the rest I'll figure out." But Danny didn't even need you to tell him the key. So he could just *react*, and his hands and his mind and spirit would go to the right chord.

And as the chords changed, he had the ability to weave in melodies that felt soulful and enhanced the overall picture. He had the ability to bob and weave, to play in and out of the other things he was listening to: Roy and the piano, of course, and the guitars and the bass, the drums and all that. It was just an innate ability he had. That's what separates great musicians.

The only other organ player like that who comes to mind for me, who I got to work with quite a bit, was Billy Preston. I was in Ringo's first All-Star Band with Billy; Billy lived in Phoenix, Arizona, so I got to do some work with him in Phoenix in a local studio. He was another one of those players that just didn't even need to know the chord progression, wasn't worried about the song. Just play the song, and he would play along, and it would seem to always work.

That's a very unusual gift for a musician to have, at least to that extent. Danny wouldn't play along tentatively. He would really just effortlessly flow through things. Even if a new chord hit that surprised him, it didn't fluster him. He was able to walk the notes into the next chord in a very musical fashion. That's really a gift you're more born with. You can study those kinds of things, to a point, but what separates the really great musicians from the studied musicians is really the innate gifts that you're born with; Danny was given an extraordinary natural gift for music, whatever instrument he was on.

Even when he was improvising, and you could feel him going off the beaten track, there was this natural consistency of time and technique. A lot of times you'll hear players sound cautious, or their playing will have this rehearsed, rote quality to it. And Danny was the opposite. It had a very fluid quality to it. You could hear him searching, but the actual groove, the tempo, the time of the notes never suffered for it—and that's very unusual.

There are guys that gifted who are jazz players. Well, they're not going to survive like that or thrive like that in this band. Their forte is jazz. Danny's forte was this music. This is the music that spoke to him, as [it does to] all of us, that really brought out the best of his playing and put it to the best use, whether it was the accordion or the organ. On his own records, he got a little more jazzy and stepped out a bit. But he just had a natural gift for playing something that fit regardless of what he was hearing. That's very unusual, and we all benefited from it, and hey, there's a lot of Danny on some great, great Bruce records that people get to listen to 'til the end of time.

I remember doing "Mansion on the Hill" quite a bit, where Danny was on the accor-

dion. I'm a beginning pedal steel player, and he would do an accordion solo leading into my pedal steel. It was actually very inspiring every night. I was always amazed at the seamless, soulful quality that he was playing.

**You're an accordion player yourself—in fact, you and Danny and Roy had that trio.**

Yeah, Danny and I and Roy would go out a couple times and play. It's kind of a good bit where in Italy we'd go out and play the Tarantella in the middle of "Tenth Avenue." In fact, there's a YouTube clip where the three of us are doing that in Italy, and Bruce's mom, Adele, and one of his aunts come out with tambourines, and they're dancing around us as we play the Tarantella.

There were a few other instances where the three of us would go out, just as a bit. We did it once in Switzerland and played an old country folk tune, and the place went crazy. Those are really the only times the three of us strapped 'em on.

**You're on one of Danny's records, too.**

Yeah, his first record, called *Flemington*. Danny had a little studio in the back, like a garage, on his property in L.A. It was just Danny and I, we went back there and worked on his record, and it was great. He was engineering. Like I say, he was good with gadgets, so he had a nice home studio set up.

And it was the same kind of thing: he recognized and put me in areas that I had an affinity for. He wasn't asking me to learn weird jazz stuff. I like to think as a musician, no matter what you play for me I'll find something that works, but if it's some strange jazz piece, I may ask you to go away for a week. And that's not practical. A good jazz player will just play something that works. But I'd feel like, well, I'm up for the challenge, but I'm gonna need a lot of time. Why don't you take a vacation, I'll see you next week! Because I like to take my time with things and really get into it. But Danny presented me with some areas to play in where, right out of the gate, I could pretty much be fluid and play my melodic blues style and it fit.

**I was re-reading an interview that I did with Danny a few years ago where he was talking about your solo, and he said that he was a little nervous about bringing a guitar into the record because he wasn't sure how to make it fit. He said that you pretty much came in and nailed it. I think he said it was "perfect."**

Well that's a beautiful thing to hear. Again, it's Danny's record—it's a reflection of Danny. So there's a very smooth, effortless feel to it, and I think we both would have known if I was playing something that stuck out as killing the groove or not working, we just wouldn't have used it. I was grateful I came up with something that he felt good about sharing. 🍷



# CLARENCE

**Backstreets:** As the original “founding members” of the E Street Band, you and Garry go way back with Danny. Can you tell me about when and how you met? Had you known Danny prior to the E Street Band?

**Clarence Clemons:** When I joined the band, I didn’t know Danny then. When Bruce first asked me to join the band, I didn’t know any of those guys except Garry. I knew Garry because he and I played in a soul band we had put together. I lived on the other side of the tracks, that kind of deal.

So I think I met Danny at the first rehearsal. But it was interesting—when I first met Danny, we became good friends. As it progressed we started to ride together, we shared a room together, and when we first started rehearsing I moved into a house with Danny and Mad Dog. The three of us, and two boa constrictors—which I hated. Danny and I became *really* close when we were living together, I really got to know him. I always called Danny “The Pioneer,” because he turned me on to some of the first things I ever did in my life! [Laughs] I was in my mid-30s when I met him, but he introduced me to a lot of life I had never known existed.

**Like what?**

I don’t know... like, some of the first times I ever did some things, it was with Danny, you know? You can imagine, back in those days, what we were doing... all bachelors, and it was pretty wild.

**Whose boa constrictors were they?**

Mad Dog’s.

**I figured!**

I had to check, every night when we got back to the house, to make sure none of them got out, so I wouldn’t go to bed with snakes all over my bed. So it was a pretty interesting time. Like I say, I was in my mid-30s, so I was a lot older than the rest of them. It was like raising kids, seeing kids grow up around you.

**And we get the impression from the stories Bruce has been telling that Danny liked to cause a little bit of trouble.**

Well, he was always the guy—“The Pioneer,” like I said. But no matter how mad you got at him, you loved him in the next couple seconds, the next couple minutes. He was that kind of guy. But he was just a “bad boy.” He was a rebellious little kid with a whole lot of soul.

**Speaking of soul, tell me what he was like as a player, as a musician.**

Danny was the guy who filled in the parts that you’d imagine are gonna be there, that *should* be there. He plays those parts. He didn’t play a lot of out-there stuff... what he played fit perfectly with what Bruce was saying. Everybody has his own groove in the band, but you try to become an extension of what he’s saying. It’s not just about yourself. We take who we are, what we are, to make Bruce’s music Bruce’s music. And Danny was just a tremendous player in that way. He had a tremendous head for Bruce’s music.

**And my impression is that a lot of that was really instinctual.**

Exactly. You couldn’t practice to be in this game—you gotta be born with it. And we were just an amazing team, together. I feel like the circle’s been broken now, you know? But it’s still there.

**What’s it been like playing without him?**

Well, after the tears, the joy... you still feel him there, you know? When I’m on stage with Danny—which I am, still, every night—I didn’t *hear* a lot of organ, because I’ve got my earphones, but I *felt* the organ.

Montreal, Canada  
November 8, 1978.

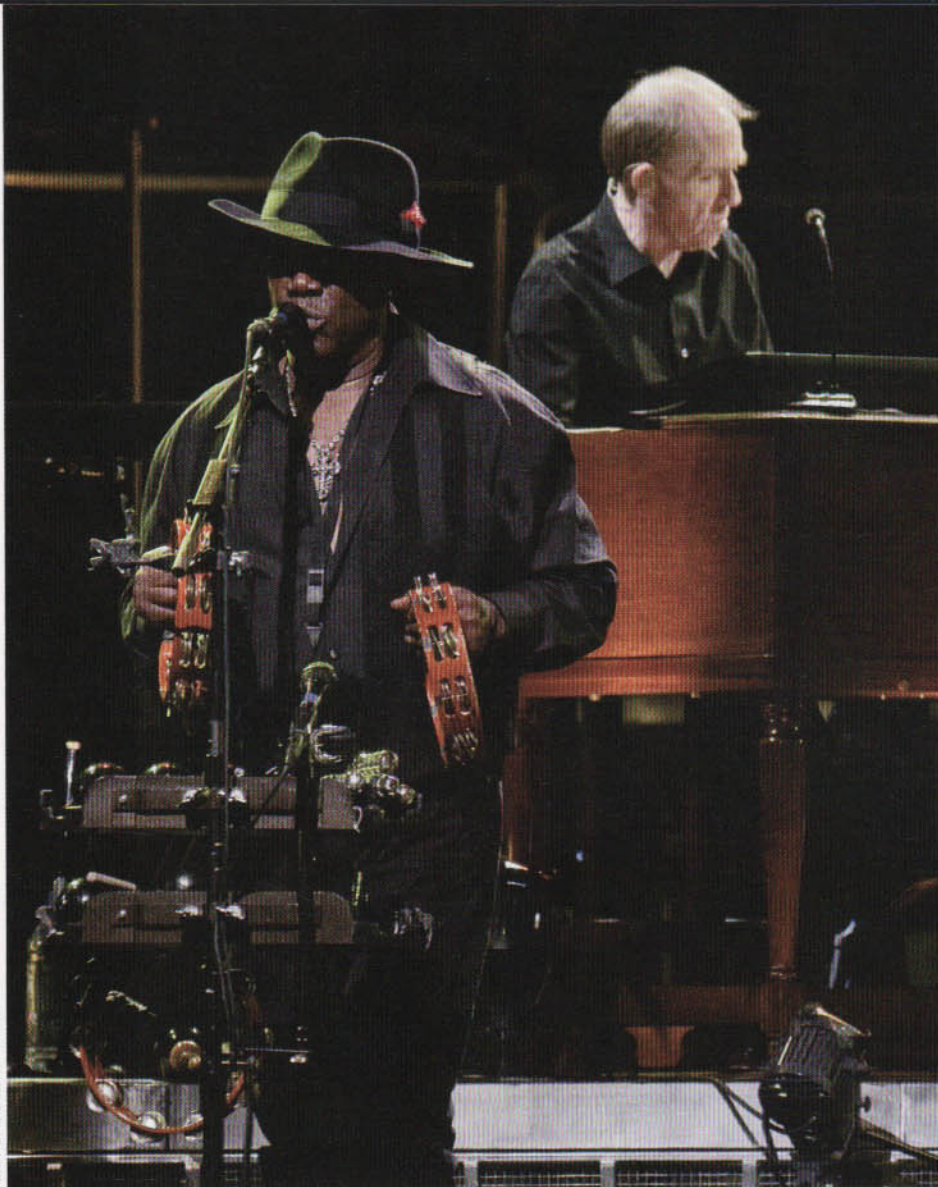


Augusta, ME  
August 12, 1978



PHOTOS: LAWRENCE KIRSCH@THELIGHTINDARKNESS.COM





And so when I'm playing now, I still just feel it. Because I really don't hear everything on the stage; it'd be too much to take and still get into. I've got a nice little balance, a nice mix—the guy on the tour who mixes the sound on my side, he's just amazing. We're at the point now where I can look at him and he'll know exactly what I want. So like I say, I didn't ever hear too much organ, but I'm standing right in front of it, so I could *feel* it. And Danny put such *feeling* into what he played, man... it was like even though there were fast parts and chops here and chops there... he was just a great guy, a great player. I'm going to miss him so much.

#### How has Charlie been doing?

Charlie's doing fine, Charlie's doing fine. You know, that's a hell of a thing to have to do, to step into somebody's place like that—like jumping on a train going 100 miles an hour. So Charlie has stepped up, and the more he plays, the longer he's there, the better he's going to get. I mean, Danny didn't get there right away, you know? The longer we were together, the stronger we got. So that's how I think about Charlie. And he's a great guy, too.

**In a hell of a spot, as you say.**

Yeah, I wouldn't want to be there [laughs].

**What was your relationship like with Danny over the years? As everybody grew up together, essentially, did you stay close after you no longer lived together?**

Well, after we didn't live together, and we all got on our own, it was like it is today—we don't see each other a lot. Everybody's in different places. But your heart's in the same place all the time when it comes to the music. Our heads, too. That's why Bruce can call this band back together any time, and we're there, and it's happening just like it never left. Because we keep our heads into Bruce, musically we do.

**Tell me about Indianapolis, when Danny came back. I know that got a lot of our hopes up, and I was wondering, did you know that would be his last performance? Or did you guys have hope, too?**

I didn't know, I had no idea. Looking back at it, it was both very joyful and such a sad thing, too, you know? To think this was his last thing, his last time playing... I don't know if I could have handled it if I had

known that. It would have been too much to bear. [Instead], it was about the joy, having Danny back on that stage. When he's there, it's hard to be... we still knew he was sick, but we knew... I thought... he would still be there. I prayed for miracles, you know? Danny was a miracle kind of guy.

#### What do you mean?

Things happen, and you wonder, how did he do that? Whatever happened, he mastered things. Obstacles. He was just a miracle kind of guy. We were hoping that one would save him this time. But God knows best.

**Max talked a little about visiting Danny at the end. Did the whole band go to see Danny together?**

Yeah, we all went up there one night—we all would go see him, but one night we all went at the same time. We played some old music... we did "Sandy," and it was just a wonderful thing. He was in such a medicated state, it was hard for him to keep his eyes open, but you could feel him, I could feel his energy. Every once in a while he would open his eyes, and... it was tough.

**But you knew the music was getting through?**

Yeah, you knew it was getting through.

**It must have been hard to come back out and play in Tampa.**

Yeah, in a way, I guess *that* was Danny's last show. He was *there* that night. His soul was sill on the earth, and I know he was there. A farewell to Danny show, that was.

**Any more Danny stories that need to be told?**

You've probably heard the Chevy Coma Soma Doma story, right?

**Let's hear it—what is Chevy Coma Soma Doma?**

[Laughs] That's exactly what we've been trying to find out! This was when we bunked in one room and stuff—traveled in two cars, or one car, or whatever, back in the early days. Danny was in one bed, and Bruce and I were in the other bed, or Bruce was in a bed next to my bed—it was in an attic, or something like that. Somebody's friend, family, whatever. And we were talking, and everybody else was asleep, and suddenly, Danny sat straight up in the bed, looked wide awake, looked at both of us and said, "Chevy Coma Soma Doma." And laid back down and went right back to sleep [laughs].

And we were just sitting there with our mouths open, looking at each other!

**And you never knew what that meant?**

Never found out, man.

**I guess that's why he's the "Minister of Mystery."**

The Phantom. 🦇



# FLYING SOLO

BY  
MARK  
SQUIREK

**B**roadly defined terms like *smooth jazz* and *lite jazz* have come to cover so many disparate styles of instrumentals, they almost become meaningless: *smooth jazz* can apply to the complex rhythms and melody of Weather Report, the delicacy of an acoustic piece by Pat Metheny, or the made-for-radio sheen of Kenny G's instrumental constructions. The same can be said of *rock music*. When it comes to the solo work of Danny Federici, you can call what he did as an artist *lite jazz*, *easy jazz* or *smooth jazz*, it makes no difference. The sincerity of what he created and the expertise and skill he used to put it together is undeniable and, like the best of the genre, transports the listener to another place.

Danny titled his first CD after the New Jersey town he grew up in, *Flemington*. Its geographical specificity is telling: while not as rooted in a sense of place as, say, Miles Davis's *Sketches From Spain*, the music transcends the mediocrity associated with much of *lite jazz* and takes you somewhere. At many points the music sounds like it could only have been born from the experience of having ridden through the state a thousand times in the dark of the night. The music gives an outsider a beautiful impression of New Jersey.

*Flemington* was recorded in 1997 during the E Street Band's "decade off." To hear it you'd be hard-pressed to believe it was made by the same musician who spent years supporting a madman with a mission telling stories in words and verse while thousands scream around them.

First released as *Flemington* on the MusicMasters label, the CD was later reissued—with some minor adjustments and an additional track—on the Hip-O label, retitled simply *Danny Federici*. On its initial release,

**F**lemington is my hometown. My parents got ill over the last three or four years and they finally passed away. I was going back to my hometown to make sure they were doing okay, and I had a chance to talk with some high school buddies—good friends who I hadn't spoken to in a long time—and they told me that they wondered what happened to Danny Federici. They wondered where I went, and all the things that they had read about me with Bruce and the band had said that I was from all these different towns in New Jersey. A couple of people said to me they thought I was ashamed of the town that I grew up in—that I was just up there in that rock 'n' roll band and I forgot my friends. That was not the case, so I decided to sort of say, "Hey guys, I'm proud of where I'm from," and that's the name of my album.

—Danny Federici in 1998, speaking to Point Blank's Salvador Trepal

*Flemington* opened with the title track. The re-release added a new song, "Erica," as the opener. Federici wrote all the songs on the CD except "Egg Beater," which he co-wrote with Tony Braunagel, drummer on the CD. Braunagel provides some beautifully restrained and supportive drumming throughout the album. Nothing he does ever draws away from the song itself. Every musician in Danny's ensemble shows the same restraint.

On the original 1997 release, the opening song "Flemington" finds an immediate joy that comes out in sharp, cascading piano riffs that are anchored by the deep, reassuring sounds of an organ. Federici's piano—something we really aren't exposed to with the E Street Band—reminds me of Chuck Leavell or even Chick Corea, the piano precise and exact in its place. Not a single wasted space, nothing extraneous.

On the second song, "Mingle-Mangle," a fat bass leads everything off and instead of a sharp attack at the piano, we get thick chords from the organ. As they grow, a crisp lead guitar leaps out before the organ swells at exactly the right moment and takes its place in the center of the mix. Without stretching its welcome, the organ recedes and the street-cruising beat of the song itself reasserts itself.

Given Federici's training and history on the accordion, it's surprising that the instrument doesn't appear in the lead until the fourth song, "Mr. Continental." This is beautiful seduction music that would have been just as perfect in the late 1930s as it is today. A few songs later the accordion shows up again, but this time with a new sound on "Egg Beater." Federici takes the accordion past our preconceived notions of the instrument and avoids the usual evocations of dinner at an Italian restaurant or champagne music. Instead we hear the instrument dodge and float with grace around the sharp notes of a gut-strung guitar.

The highlight of the Danny's debut may be found on "A Doorman's Life." It opens with a dark, evocative feel that features a bass moaning for attention underneath everything around

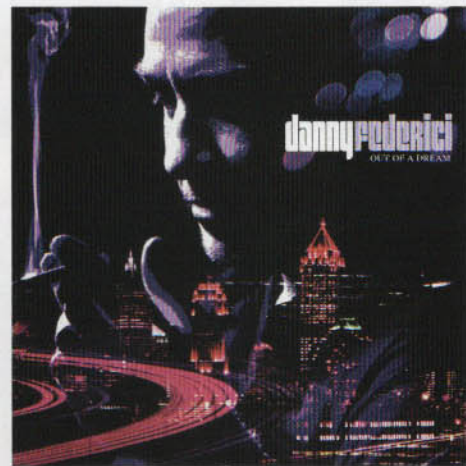
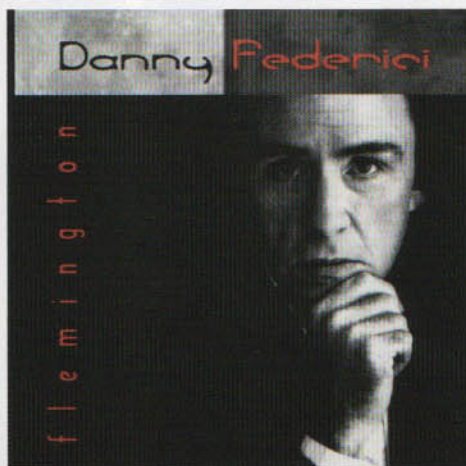
it. After about a minute and a half the music drops down to its essentials, and a previously unheard guitar comes to forefront. It is one of the most understated and perfect solos Nils Lofgren has ever cut. After a minute he drops out, and the song continues in its deliberate groove. When Nils comes back near the end, he uses a good amount of sustain to carry the remainder of the song.

Closing the album is "Pennsylvania Avenue," a stately piece that ends the drive through New Jersey with both celebration and dignity. Nothing you hear on the CD would have sounded out of place on a release by the CTI label in its prime.

**T**he same quality jazz feel holds true for Federici's second release, *Out of a Dream*. The overall sound of the CD is a bit more polished than *Flemington*, and cooler in feel, the music moving into Steely Dan / Boz Scaggs / Ronnie Laws territory. Whereas almost every song on *Flemington* was anchored by a strong bass line that often jumped out of the mix and then dropped back in, this time out Federici is mixing things up by adding a few more percussion fills and incorporating strings on several of the songs.

Like *Flemington*, this CD was also released twice on two different labels. Initially self-released as *Sweet*, Danny's sophomore album was initially available through Backstreet Records in 2004. The following year V2 Records picked it up and, by working through Sony/BMG, gave it wider distribution. Unlike the first album, Federici's only solo writing credit on *Out of a Dream* is "Maya"; this second effort is more of a collaboration with saxophonist and guitarist Michael Cates. They share quite a few co-writing credits, and Cates has two solo compositions here as well. Covers of the Rolling Stones' "Miss You" and Bob Dylan's "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" round things out.

Sharing the responsibility allowed Danny to play more keyboards, a real difference between the two CDs, with his piano more notable than on *Flemington*. A perfect example of Federici's





willingness to step out a bit more is the track "Maya." He opens with a piano line that, at first, seems to wander. Soon, though, it magically falls into a wonderful melodic path that finds itself wrapped in strings. Instead of growing into a full-blown production number with each passage, the emphasis never moves from the piano. Even when little pieces of new age percussion show up, you are never far from beauty of those piano lines. It is the centerpiece of the album, and a real revelation to those unfamiliar with Federici's piano skills. It may be Federici's finest solo cut. It is only fitting that it is titled after his wife.

Following "Maya" is a street-walking, organ propelled version of the Stones' classic "Miss You." The horns add a texture that helps the organ jump out, and Federici's fills are almost perfect. The backing vocals prove to be a distraction from everything else, but Cates is perfect on sax, and with each go-round of the verses, Federici grows more adventurous on the organ. As he does, you hear brief echoes of the work of Jimmy Smith. A wah-wah guitar buried in the mix adds to the fun being had, as if Johnny "Guitar" Watson stopped by to add a little something special to the session.

That tough guitar sound comes out again in the opening of "Fragments of an Afternoon." It hides in the background, calling out to the melodic piano fills and never once overwhelming them. With distinctive soloing courtesy of Brian Partridge, the guitar is much more important on *Out of a Dream* than it was before. It's another example of the musicians on Danny's records supporting the whole. In "Venus's Pearl," the accordion opens the song and lays the foundation for a wonderful Cates saxophone excursion that never leaves the listener forgetting what is going on around the solo.

Closing the CD with "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" brings a parallel with Warren Zevon's final release, *The Wind*. In Zevon's case it was a deliberate gesture, a nod to his short time remaining; with Phantom Dan, we just don't know.

In Federici's version of the classic, he opens with deliberate chords and then moves the song along with short piano notes that hold the familiar lyric in our minds. The organ sound adds emphasis to the horns and piano and in each instance reminds us what a gifted player Danny was. Rarely flashy, but each fill is supportive of the surrounding music, finding its space, never detracting from the song. Which, in the end, is how many people described his role in the E Street Band. 🐣

**J**ason Federici offers "Flemington" available as a free download at [dannyfund.org/downloads](http://dannyfund.org/downloads). He calls it "one of my favorite songs of my father's. It was one of his favorites as well, named after the town we grew up in. Both of his albums, *Flemington* and *Out of a Dream* are from the soul of a rare musician's personal passion. You can hear it in every note."

# FLYING HIGH



**D**anny and I go way back. First there was the Upstage club in Asbury. Then we became friends in the very early days when Steel Mill was born, practicing at Tinker [West]'s surfboard factory. Things did not come easy back then—everyone was struggling. I was opening a surf shop, The Islanders, in North Long Branch, and some of the band lived together close to the shop. I remember Danny telling me that Clarence was on the warpath because someone ate his food... a no-no!

Anyway, being in our 20s, every day was an adventure of surfing, girls, cars, and music.

Danny and I also split a jet ski—it flew! We got chased by the marine police, and of course our papers were not in order. No license, no registration. Lucky for us, a couple of tickets for a show got us out of that mess.

As things got better, Dan learned to fly and bought a plane he kept at Allaire Airport. Here are pictures of Dan flying his plane around New York with me—the two of us flying up the Hudson River, then around the city in another adventure I'll never forget. 🐣

—Vince Troniec





# OTHER VOICES

## ROBBIN THOMPSON

**W**hen I first joined Steel Mill, Danny and I hit it off pretty well. He was a live wire, and so was I. It was always a trip to drive with Danny. As I remember, he had a car with an 8-track player in it as well as a C.B. radio, and he had it rigged with a speaker in the grill so when stopped at a light he could talk to the people in cars next to us, or whistle at girls walking (if deserved). It freaked out a lot of people and also gained the attention of the police. Just what Danny needed.

It was a long time ago, and you have to remember that I was only in Steel Mill for maybe just under a year. It's always amazed me that people even remember me being in the band. When it was over I headed back to Virginia—like, immediately, to go back to school.

We all stuck together pretty much because none of us had any money, and as a group we could always manage to get a freebie here or there. Getting into a club or going to a party where there was food was never a problem. Plus, we were rehearsing all the time. In my case, I needed to rehearse because I had a lot of catching up to do, being the "new guy."

Danny could never get away with anything. He could get out of things, but never get away with it. Vini was the same way.

Bruce told some great Danny stories in his wonderful eulogy—all true, by the way. My favorite is one where he was moving from out of his apartment into another one and he had all his stuff in his car... including a decent sized pot plant. Mattress on the top of the car, chairs, clothes, and all the hats. Danny loved a hat.

He had to go into a store to get something, and when he came back his car was gone. Disappeared... history. He looked all over the place, thinking maybe he'd had a lapse of memory as far as where he'd parked it, but still no car. So, he went to the police station to report it stolen. It turned out a policeman had seen the pot plant in the car so he had it towed to the impound to wait for the owner to come and report it stolen. Oops!

It was a great time in life. None of us thought it would end. Now it all seems like just a blur in the rearview. We'll all miss Danny.

## SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY

**S**o we lose another friend... I have known Danny since he started playing at the Stone Pony back in the late '60s. He was always a crusty guy with a sarcastic sense of humor, so, of course, we got along just fine. I can recall many nights jamming on blues and rock 'n' roll classics, then he and I, Garry, and whomever else was on stage would shift into some jazz standard or improvise on a chord progression. He was a much more advanced musician than most of us at the time, and he raised the bar for all of us. It was embarrassing to hear how good he already was and to listen to your own pitiful efforts. And, yes, for all you real early fans out there, Danny was the one who pushed the speaker cabinets over onto the chief of police who was behind the stage trying to cut the power on a Steel Mill concert. There were arrest warrants, so he always denied it, but I was back there and saw him get up and do it. No one was hurt, but it helped keep the show going. Good on ya, Danny. Rest easy.

— from his website, [www.southsidejohnny.com](http://www.southsidejohnny.com)



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN



STEVE VAN ZANDT

## Steel Mill Churns Out A Roomful of Good Music

**WEST LONG BRANCH** — There are times when everything works out just right, when all the bits and pieces fit together — and take you with them — into the perfect thing they form.

It happens in almost any aspect of life you can think of, from fixing a car to dancing a ballet, from playing a ballgame to making music.

It happened with music Saturday night . . . and it happened beautifully.

Steel Mill played Monmouth College, giving one of the best concerts to be heard in this area in a long time. It was tight; it was inspired.

They mixed the old songs — "Dancing in the Streets," which opened the show, getting them off and together fast, the ever-changing "Slow Blues," "Georgia," "Resurrection" — with some new ones — "I Can't Take It," "Changing," "The Train Song." And they were all good.

One of Steel Mill's strong points always has been in their ability to create lovely vocal harmonies which soar above their churning instrumental mix. With the addition of vocalist-writer Robbin Thompson (formerly with Mercy Flight in Richmond, Va.), the harmonies are even fuller. Thompson alternates lead singing with Bruce Springsteen (guitar/vocals).



DANNY FEDERICI

Van Zandt, and organist Danny Federici. Perhaps the highest point of harmonic perfection came with Springsteen's new song, "Changing," when Lopez took off for the heights, Van Zandt followed the guitar riff, and Springsteen and Thompson sang lead. Even Federici, who rarely sings, was singing in there someplace.

Instrumentally, too, the group is growing tighter and tighter. They anticipate each other, working instrument off instrument with precision timing. Springsteen's guitar is almost always out front, laying down clean blues riffs, shooting lines around Federici's heavily jazz-bent organ runs and Van Zandt's bass while

happy rhythm.

It's good to hear good music. It seems as if a lot of people expected to do just that — by the time the first band, Sunny Jim, a group from Point Pleasant whose music is filled with the kind of sunshine-sound you hear in the Beatles' "Abbey Road" album, finished their set, the huge gymnasium was filled wall-to-wall with people sitting on the floor and up the side walls on bleachers.

It was a quiet crowd, maybe 4,000 or so. And there were no hassles, despite the fact that people had to be turned away at the door because of a lack of space. There was just a roomful of good people grooving.

## GARLAND JEFFREYS

**D**anny and I hooked up around 1979, and he and Roy made a major contribution to *Escape Artist* with [Bob] Clearmountain engineering in 1980. We really began our friendship back then. Over the years we hung out from time to time in NYC, and he sometimes joined me on stage. His accordion on "Jump Jump" with G.E. Smith on guitar was and still is fantastic! In recent years we spent some quiet time together in the city. For me he was a lovely guy. I'm sad to see him go.



# THE LAST CARNIVAL

BY  
CHARLES  
R. CROSS

In case you happened to miss the detail, Bruce Springsteen's *Working on a Dream* is dedicated to Danny Federici. Of all the various news and events in the Springsteen world over the past two years—new albums, major tours, Super Bowl—Danny's death in April 2008 stands as the most significant, and, of course, as the most tragic.

Though every member of the E Street Band plays an important role, Federici's place cannot be overstated. It was Danny and Vini Lopez who together formed Child—a group that Bruce was invited to join and not the other way around, as Danny was quick to note. "Danny is one of the pillars of our sound, and has played beside me as a great friend for more than forty years," Bruce said when Danny's illness was first announced, and everyone hoped it would turn out the other way.

If there is an emotional core to *Working on a Dream*, it rests in "The Last Carnival," Bruce's ode to Danny. "Hangin' from the trapeze, my wrists waiting for your wrists," Bruce sings in a mournful whisper. "Two daredevils high up on the wall of death/You throwing the knife that lands inches from my heart." These lyrics are as heartfelt, and as mournful, as any in Bruce's canon.

When journalist Mark Hagen asked Bruce about "The Last Carnival" earlier this year, Springsteen quickly admitted it was about Danny: "It started out as a way of making sense of his passing. He was a part of that sound of the boardwalk the band grew up with, and that's something that's going to be missing now."

For a guy born inland, in Flemington, west New Jersey, Federici will forever be associated with the Asbury Park scene. He was one of the stalwarts at the early Upstage club, and played in a few early shore bands. He was just a teenager when he met Bruce, but he'd already lived a wild life, and one that had seen him run into trouble with the law more than once. He earned his nickname "Phantom," when he escaped a late-'60s riot at a concert. Clarence Clemons tells a hilarious story in *Big Man* of getting pulled over in the mid-seventies and having his car searched because the police knew he was in a band with Danny.

Offstage, Danny was funny, humble, and

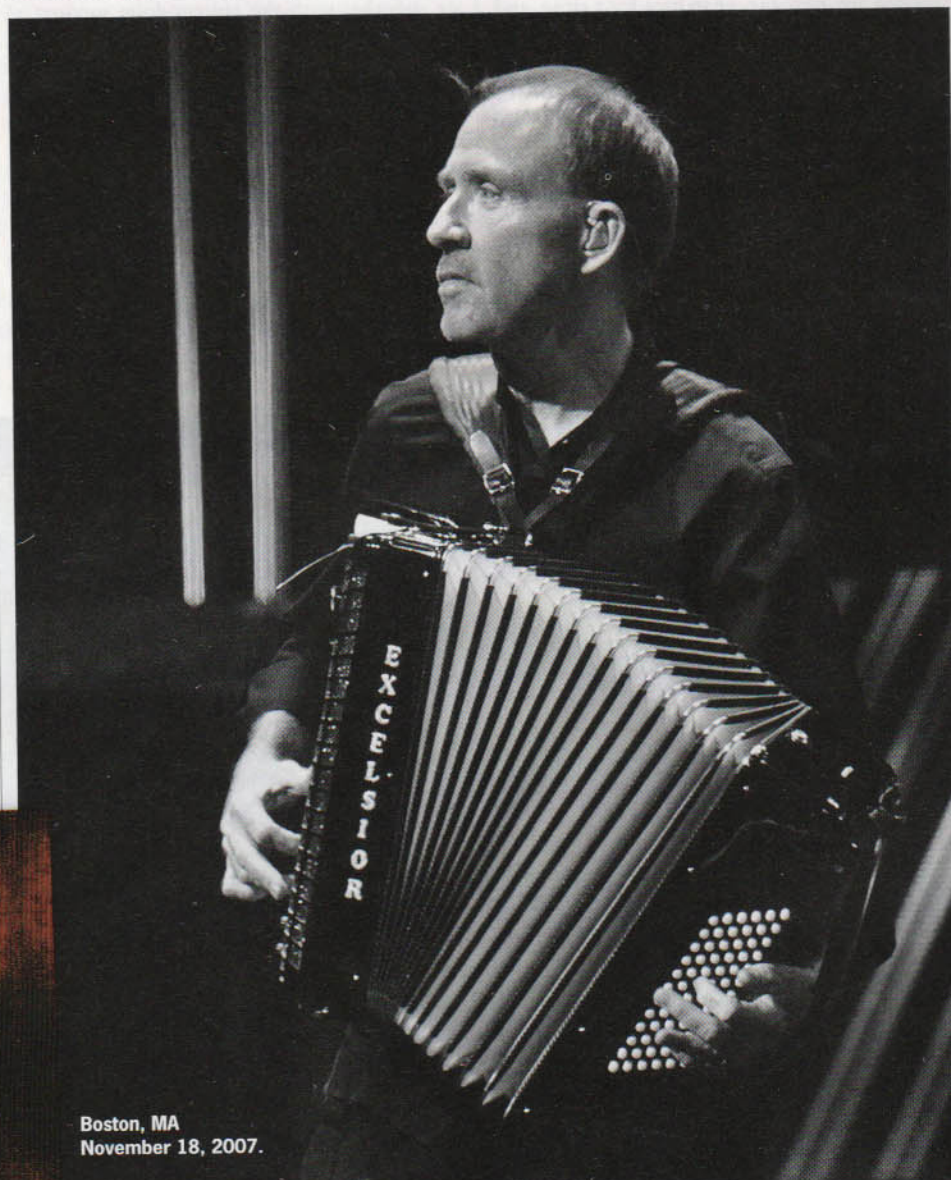
shy. He gave his first extensive interview ever to *Backstreets*, but not until 1991, after he'd been playing with Bruce for over two decades. Yet when he broke his silence, his observations were sharp and insightful: "The E Street Band was someone and no one at the same time." He talked openly about his addiction troubles, and after getting sober he was less private, and quick to thank those who had stuck by him, most notably Bruce.

Danny could play a dozen instruments, but it was the accordion, oddly, that made him stand out at early E Street shows and that forever tied him to the "boardwalk" sound. There was something about Danny breaking out this odd instrument that suggested an earlier, more innocent time, but also that the carnival had begun. His signature contributions to "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" and to "Wild Billy's Circus Story" forever cemented that connection, but in part Danny always seemed like he

belonged to a different era. Had he been born a few decades earlier, he might have found a home for himself working in a carnny.

"The Last Carnival" appears as a direct descendant of "Wild Billy's Circus Story," and Wild Billy has evolved into a handsome man. Yet where "Circus Story" is ebullient and joyous, "Last Carnival" is mournful, the first of two funereal dirges on an album that otherwise is upbeat.

In life itself, at a certain age, you find yourself as I do now, with names in your address book of friends and associates you can no longer ring on the phone because they are dead. Somehow I can't bring myself to erase these entries, to discard the printed record of our connection. Danny Federici always had a friendly word for this pesky writer, and this magazine. With Danny's passing, the fairgrounds feel more desolate, the man-beast in his cage more mournful than he was. 🐾



Boston, MA  
November 18, 2007.

A.M. SADDLER PHOTO

## THE LAST CARNIVAL

Sundown, sundown  
They're taking all the tears down  
Where have you gone my handsome Billy?

Sundown, sundown  
The carnival train's never 'round  
Where are you now my darling Billy?

We won't be dancing together on the high wire  
Facing the lions with you at my side anymore  
We won't be breathing the smoke and the fire  
On this midway

Hangin' from the trapeze my wrists waitin' for your wrists  
Two daredevils high up on the wall of death  
You throwin' the knife that lands inches from my heart  
Sundown

Moonrise, moonrise  
The light that was in your eyes  
Has gone away

Daybreak, daybreak  
The thing in you that made me ache  
Has gone to stay

We'll be riding the train without you tonight  
The train that keeps on movin'  
Its black smoke touching the evening sky  
A million stars shining above as like every soul lives and dies  
Has been gathered together by a God to sing a hymn over your bones

Sundown, sundown  
Empty are the fairgrounds  
Where are you now my handsome Billy?



# OVER LITTLE EDEN

BY  
**JASON  
DANIEL  
FEDERICI**

**A**s a son, I've always looked up to and admired my father in many ways. But it was his fight with cancer that took that admiration to a whole new level. It was November of 2005 when my father found a lump under his arm and was diagnosed with Stage II melanoma. I'll never forget that phone call. As petrified as I was, my father made sure to explain to me that much could be done and that he was going to fight this with everything he had. He continuously showed my sisters and me his courage and love while fighting a difficult battle.

Some time later, after his condition had been made public, I was driving to work in Long Beach, California, and I had this overwhelming feeling that I needed to get back to New York and see my father. I had spoken to him the night before, and he casually told me that he was going to go through another chemo treatment soon. The one before seemed to have stopped any new cancer in him for a time, and he was even planning on re-joining the tour. Still, it wasn't a feeling that I could let pass, and I was on a plane the next morning.

I arrived at the hospital around noon on a cold day in March. I got to my Dad and found him crying. The melanoma had metastasized into his brain and he had ten tumors. The doctor gave him four weeks to live.

We spent almost every day together, and he still fought like a gladiator. On March 20, 2008, with some persistence from Max and Becky Weinberg and the E Street family, my Dad agreed to play a show with his brothers in Indianapolis. Because of the tumors in his

brain, he had a lot of trouble controlling his left hand and was worried about it before the show. Once he stepped on stage, though, he began to glow and rocked that night in a special way. He looked down at me and was moving all his fingers on his left hand, smiling. He didn't miss a note, and we both had a night for the books. It was really moving for everyone there.

We all had a nice Easter and spent time with family and friends and enjoyed each other's company. It was special for all of us to have that. My father passed away about four weeks later on April 17, surrounded by his close friends and family while Bob Dylan played on the radio and the sun came through the window and lit his face.

That night, I launched the Danny Federici Melanoma Fund that I built with my Dad, to help raise awareness and funds to fight melanoma. The outpouring of love that came in was really touching to say the least. Within six months, with the tremendous support of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, the *Backstreets* community and fans from around the world, the website raised enough money to conduct two separate cutting edge studies for the treatment and prevention of melanoma that are currently in progress.

The day after Dad died, Patti and Bruce had me come to their home and helped me with all of the arrangements. Everyone chipped in, and my father's funeral was a celebration of his life filled with a lot of beautiful music and love. Bruce closed out the ceremony with his heartfelt eulogy and sang "The Last Carnival." It was a special day.

**I**t was the middle of August 2008 when my best friend and bandmate Jason Heath and I went to New Jersey to bring a few of Dad's things to Los Angeles. We took our time driving across the country and stopped in a crystal cave in Pennsylvania, then we went to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland where I met with one of the curators who helped me put together a display for Dad. Then we made our way to the Harley Davidson 105th Anniversary in Milwaukee. It just kind of worked out that way, as life does. We hooked up with one of my Dad's friends who put us up and handed us our choice of Harleys, and we proceeded to have a really memorable few days in Harley country. There's definitely something about driving a hog down those old country roads, surrounded by cornfields with your friends as the sun's going down.

Jason and I made it to the Bruce show on the last night of the event. It was bittersweet to see everyone without my father there. But it also made me realize, more than ever, the family and history that they have all given me throughout my life. I still cried for the first half of the show... until I smiled. I realized that the music that my father and this wonderful band have given us all will last many lifetimes and touch so many people. What a beautiful gift to give.

It was about two hours into the show when my cell phone rang. It was Wayne, Bruce's assistant, telling me to come to the back of the stage right away. That's when I heard Bruce on stage calling my name to come up. Before I

"He looked down at me... smiling.  
He didn't miss a note."  
March 20, 2008



Backstage in Indianapolis  
March 20, 2008



JASON FEDERICI PHOTOS





Roy, Jason, and Bruce in the key of C.  
Milwaukee, WI, August 30, 2008.

could think about it, I found myself running to the side of the stage, up the stairs, and around the back where my Dad's tech had an accordion waiting for me to jump into. I was so scared and so excited at the same time, it was ridiculous. It wasn't until I was on stage that I realized I've never tried to play this song before, and I turned to Roy to ask what key it was in. I felt a little better when he said "the key of C." Regardless of my musical contribution that night in front of 100,000 fans, I was in a state of bliss. The energy you feel being in that situation is unexplainable, and I realized in a new way what rock 'n' roll did for my Pops. It was a moment I will never forget (and I'm happy to say I can now play "Sandy" blindfolded).

We left the next day for St. Paul, smiling

like crazy as we went to spend time with Tom Morello and Rage Against the Machine for their show there at the Target Center during the Republican National Convention. That was also an incredible show. Colorado and Utah gave us the time and perspective we needed to process what had just happened, and we safely arrived in Los Angeles and back to life. What I learned on that trip was this world is only as big as we make it out to be. We have a beautiful country with beautiful people that are worth getting to know. It's good for your soul.

A few weeks later, I was messing around with my motorcycle and the phone rang. It was Bruce. He told me that he was recording a song for the new album *Working on a Dream* that he wanted me to play accordion on. While I was

pinching myself to see if I was actually awake, he was saying that I would get the details soon. The following week, I found myself standing in the studio where they recorded "We Are the World," playing on "The Last Carnival."

During the next couple of months, with the love and help of Bruce and the E Street Band, we turned our simple website for my father into the "DannyFund," in association with the Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA). The MRA is committed to raising awareness of melanoma and funding top researchers from around the world to find a cure. In February of 2009, the MRA hosted their annual scientific retreat in Washington, D.C. The retreat brought together top doctors, researchers, and politicians to discuss what has been done, what needs to be done, and how we can come together to find a cure for melanoma and other skin cancers. It was a very powerful three days that made me realize that this can happen. But we still have our work cut out for us, and that's why the MRA and the DannyFund exist.

In my father's memory and the memory of so many others, tell a friend, be aware, and help us to find a cure for this vicious disease. In the interim, we'll continue to make music, bring fantastic musicians together, and raise the DannyFund to a beautiful new place with your help. I would like to thank Bruce and the Band for their support of the DannyFund along with the *Backstreets* community and Springsteen community as a whole.

To read more about my Dad's final show, to see clips from the first DannyFund memorial show dedicated to my beautiful sisters Harley and Madison, and to learn more about the DannyFund and the MRA, visit the websites [www.melanomaresearchalliance.org](http://www.melanomaresearchalliance.org) and [www.dannyfund.org](http://www.dannyfund.org). 🐾

One last time in the spotlight  
March 20, 2008



## DANNY'S ADVICE

**W**hat people take for granted on a daily basis, among so many other things, is their skin. I spent my life, like many others, catching some rays, surfing, hanging out in the sun and it never bothered me until now. Who knew that something as simple as a proper sunscreen or keeping yourself covered up on a sunny day could one day save your life? Our culture looks at a nice tan as a sign of luxury. We spend time in tanning booths when we can't go to the beach or lay by the pool. It's time to think again. Especially if you're fair-skinned, have freckles, or light eyes. Be aware of the dangers, take precaution, and have yourself checked out regularly by a dermatologist from head to toe. It could absolutely make the difference in your life.

—Danny Federici



Madam Marie, R.I.P.

## This Boardwalk Life

By Jean Mikle

**T**he legend of Madam Marie, born Marie Castello, began in a different time.

She was from nearby Neptune City, but it was in Asbury Park, New Jersey, that she started telling fortunes, in 1932. The Depression was on, but the city by the sea was still a glittering tourist destination then, a place where ball gowns and top hats were common. You couldn't wear a bathing suit on the boardwalk or walk on the boards without your shoes.

It was also a place where it may have been possible for a fortune teller to get a ticket from city police for the simple act of sooth-saying. No one seems to know for sure, but Bruce Springsteen's words, "Well, the cops finally busted Madam Marie, for telling fortunes better than they do," from "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)," are based on an Asbury urban legend with a ring of truth.

Asbury Park was, after all, founded as a Methodist town, and there were occasional crusades in the 1930s and '40s against "sins" like drinking, games of chance, and fortune telling.

Whatever the truth, Madam Marie wasn't talking. But she did gab about Springsteen, a skinny kid who played guitar on the boardwalk in the late '60s and early '70s, and at least once, had his fortune told by Madam Marie. That was likely inside the quirky little building on the boardwalk called the "Temple of Knowledge," with its weird images of a black cat, an unblinking eye and bright blue paint.

Bruce said at least once that Madam Marie told him he would be a success, but that that was a line she probably used with all the guitar players. And there were a lot of them in Asbury Park in the late '60s and '70s, when rock 'n' roll reigned in Convention Hall on the boardwalk and was played by aspiring singers in clubs along Ocean Avenue and Kingsley Street.



By then, Asbury had become a little bit seedy, a place, as Vini "Mad Dog" Lopez once told me, "that your parents didn't really want you to go." No more ball gowns and top hats, but there were still amusement rides and miniature golf on the boardwalk, and "The Circuit," lined with bars and clubs, was still in full swing.

Madam Marie was still telling fortunes, and the boardwalk was still crowded. Now it was the young rock 'n' rollers and their fans who came to find out what the future held. Bands like the Rolling Stones, performers like Elton John and Ray Charles, and even actor Elliott Gould and auteur Woody Allen came to see Madam Marie.

When the '80s came, the amusements gradually disappeared from the boardwalk. The clubs were shuttered. Traffic lights slowed down the cars on The Circuit. A failed redevelopment effort left a haunted, half-finished building only a block away from The Temple of Knowledge.

Eventually, even Madam Marie stopped coming to the boardwalk and moved her fortune-telling business a couple miles west, to Route 35 in Ocean Township. The small blue building remained, now just a tourist destination for the few people who ventured down to the Asbury boards. They'd snap photos and look around at the shut-

tered stores and deserted beach, wondering what had happened. But Madam Marie and her family, which eventually numbered four children, 14 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, and six great-great grandchildren, always made sure The Temple of Knowledge looked nice.

When the building was defaced by graffiti, which happened fairly frequently in those days, it would be freshly painted just a short time later. The unblinking eye, the black cat, and the blue background remained pristine, even as everything else decayed and deteriorated.

Flash forward to 2002. Bruce and the E Streeters were in Convention Hall, rehearsing for the Rising tour during a record-breaking heat wave. Thousands of people and dozens of journalists descended on Asbury Park.

They photographed and filmed the little blue building, and Madam Marie herself returned, triumphantly, receiving a bouquet of flowers from Don Stine, owner of Antic Hay Books, when she appeared at his Cookman Avenue store to tell fortunes on July 30.

In the summer of 2006, as traffic began to pick up on the boardwalk with another redevelopment effort underway, Madam Marie returned. The Castello family reopened The Temple of Knowledge and began telling fortunes again.

This time it was mostly Madam Marie's granddaughter, "Sabrina," who peered into the future, although the most famous fortune teller in rock 'n' roll history did occasionally make an appearance, when her arthritis wasn't so bad.

Only a short time before her death, Madam Marie told the city's fortune for my friend Bill Handleman, who writes a column for *The Asbury Park Press*. Asbury Park, she predicted, will rise up one day soon, and recapture its glory.

Maybe she was on to something.

Marie Castello passed away on July 1, 2008, at age 93. The city lowered the flag to half-staff in her honor. Her family said The Temple of Knowledge, the longest tenant on the venerable old boardwalk, would remain, with Sabrina now in charge. 🐾

## MYSTERIES UNCOVERED

Bruce Springsteen on Madam Marie

**B**ack in the day when I was a fixture on the Asbury Park boardwalk, I'd often stop and talk to Madam Marie as she sat on her folding chair outside the Temple of Knowledge.

I'd sit across from her on the metal guard rail bordering the beach, and I watched as she led the day trippers into the small back room where she would unlock a few of the mysteries of their future. She always told me mine looked pretty good—she was right. The world has lost enough mystery as it is—we need our fortunetellers. We send our condolences out to her family who've carried on her tradition. Over here on E Street, we will miss her. 🐾



# Heaven's Waiting on Down the Tracks

By Louis P. Masur

On June 13, 2008 Tim Russert died suddenly of a heart attack while at work. Born in Buffalo, New York, and raised in a working-class Catholic family, he was best known publicly for his journalistic work as long-time moderator of *Meet the Press*. Russert did not so much moderate as interrogate and excavate—he probed contradictory statements and extracted truthful answers. In 2008, *Time* named him one of the 100 most influential people in the world (Springsteen was also named).

Once asked to identify a guest he would most like to book, he answered Bruce Springsteen. "I'm very intrigued by him," Russert said. "He has a real understanding of the political dialogue, of faith and life in urban America."

In naming Bruce, Russert happened to be selecting the one musical artist he cherished more than any other. The interest went back to Russert's days at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, where he booked concerts for his undergraduate institution John Carroll University in Cleveland. After hearing Bruce's music on the Kid Leo show on WMMS, he looked into scheduling him. He got Springsteen to appear for \$2,500 on a weeknight in February 1975. According to Russert, "I made enough money to pay for my second year of law school." Hearing the story from Russert in 1981, who added that he paid for his first year of law school playing pinochle in Buffalo, Bruce quipped, "That sounds like one of my songs: I went to law school on a rock concert and a pinochle game."



When, in 1980, Russert met the woman he would marry in 1983, he tried to impress her with the story of booking Springsteen before he was famous. "She burst out laughing," Russert recalled in his memoir *Big Russ and Me*. "'That's nice,' she said, 'In 1975, I wrote the cover story about him for *Newsweek*.'"

Over the years, Russert took every opportunity to see Bruce perform. On September 28, 2007, when Springsteen and the E Street Band appeared live on the *Today* show, Bruce joked to the crowd that one of the things he loved about America was "Tim Russert's haircut." Russert, of course, was standing by the front of the stage. Interviewed earlier by a skeptical Matt Lauer who wondered why Russert would appear live to discuss the previous evening's primary debate, Russert admitted, "I'm just an opening act for the Boss today."

News of Russert's death reached Springsteen on tour. On June 14, 2008, at Cardiff, he dedicated "Thunder Road" to Tim:

*I'd like to do this tonight for a long time friend of the E Street Band who passed away suddenly. Tim Russert was an important, unreplaceable voice in American journalism. I watched him hold our politicians' feet to the fire on many Sunday mornings. He was always a strong voice for honesty and accountability in American government, but beyond that he was a lovely presence, a good father, husband, and good guy. He was a regular at many E Street Band shows, and I'm going to miss looking down and seeing that big smiling face in the crowd.*

*We send this out all the way back to the States tonight for his son Luke, his wife Maureen, his dad Big Russ, and all the Russert family.*

*Tim, God bless you, we will miss you...*

On June 18, a memorial service was held for Russert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. There were many eulogies. And there was music. Tim Russert's brother-in-law, Tony Scozzaro, came on stage with his guitar and played a stunning, wordless, acoustic "Born to Run."

At the end of the service Tom Brokaw announced one final eulogist. Brokaw said, "The only sad part about this appearance is, this is the one guest that Tim was never able to persuade to appear on *Meet the Press*. But they were great friends. And Tim went wherever he had to, to hear him. Ladies and gentlemen, from Europe, where he is on tour, the Boss."

Springsteen appeared via satellite and offered these words to the family:

*Luke, Maureen, Big Russ, and the Russert family. We want to send all our love and prayers from the E Street Band and share with you a memory I had of Tim. It was early in the morning. We were playing on the *Today* show, which is a little early for rock musicians. And we went into "Promised Land." And I did I what I usually do. I was looking in the faces along the front row—I always look for that face that's alive and filled with the music that we're playing. And as I scanned the front row, I got to the left side of the stage, and there was a guy in a crisp white shirt and a tie... it was Tim. And he had on that big Irish smile that hid absolutely nothing. And he was beaming like the rising sun.*

And I remember thinking, oh, my God, that's—that's Tim Russert, at this hour of the morning. And I knew that, given his day job, he had more important things to do. So, we were always flattered and honored to have Tim as a part of our E Street Band community.

*It's funny that we were playing that song: I think Tim had a real belief in that promised land and in the American idea. That was the passion that you heard behind all those tough questions on Sunday morning and in that big smile.*

*He also believed, I think, in the honesty of service, the joyful duty of honesty of service. That's his legacy for politicians, journalists, and rock musicians, too.*

*So, I want to send this out to Tim. Luke, this is for your pop.*

With that, Springsteen offered a resonant "Thunder Road." Russert, it turns out, had booked the Boss once again. 🎸





# I N MEMORIAM

Wild & Compassionate Photographer

## David Gahr, 1922 -2008

By Mike Saunders

Probably best known to Springsteen fans as the man who took the front and back cover pictures of *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* album, photographer David Gahr died in Brooklyn in May 2008, aged 85.

The son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, he was born in Milwaukee and grew up in a predominantly black community, where he was first exposed to blues and jazz music. He gained an economics degree from the University of Wisconsin, served as an infantryman in Europe in World War II, and began further studies at Columbia University in New York. Now married, he worked at a Sam Goody record store to support his family; there he started taking pictures of customers who he recognized as musicians and discovered his true calling.

Abandoning a future career in economics, he became a photographer, primarily of musicians, but also of writers, artists, and art-related subjects. "My family wants me to go back to college," he might have said, echoing one of Bruce's old raps, "but what they don't understand is, I got this camera."

Originally closely associated with the American folk music movement (he was a regular at the Newport Folk Festival and worked for the Folkways label), Gahr subsequently undertook 2,000 assignments for Time-Life and had work published in countless other books and magazines (including *Newsweek* and *Rolling Stone*), used in documentaries, and featured on album covers. Recognized as a pioneer in his field, he had a sharp eye for detail and created many iconic images during his illustrious career. In addition to Bruce Springsteen, his subjects included Howlin' Wolf, Lightning Hopkins, Charles Mingus, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, Miles Davis, Johnny Cash, John Lennon, and Bob Dylan, with



A DECADE APART: The E Street Band as captured by David Gahr in 1973 (top, from the back cover of *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* LP) and in 1984 (below, from the back of the "Cover Me" seven-inch sleeve).

whom he had a 40-year relationship, from his early folk days and infamous electric debut at Newport through to the *Love and Theft* cover shoot.

The two pictures that were selected for the cover of *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* were taken on the Jersey shore in the summer of 1973. However,

the pensive close-up of Bruce on the front and the group shot on the back were just two of many images that David Gahr captured that day in a number of locations.





Others have appeared in print over the years, including pictures of Bruce standing on the street in Long Branch, riding a tandem past a bait and tackle shop, and sitting on the boardwalk with the ocean behind him.

Gahr also had his camera trained on the stage during Bruce's Bottom Line residency in 1975 and took shots of the *Born in the U.S.A.*-era band in the mid-'80s. His portfolio also includes various interior, exterior and onstage shots of Bruce, Ronnie Spector, and the E Street Band in Cleveland in early 1977. Among them is a fascinating and rare-

ly seen group photograph that includes the four-man horn section that was touring with Bruce at the time [see page 91]. A similar shot from this obviously extremely cold outdoor session was used on the cover of the single "Say Goodbye to Hollywood," by Ronnie Spector and the E Street Band.

Those who paid tribute to David Gahr's life and career revealed that he was a colorful character, describing him as "an irascible wag" who didn't suffer fools. He was also known to be "combative and curmudgeonly"; with his teeth clenched

around an ever-present cigar, he was "full of masculine bravado," capable of unleashing "a stream of high-voltage, shouted profanity." In direct contrast, he could also be "compassionate, tender, and warm" with an engaging personality that often enabled him to achieve instant empathy with his subjects and win their friendship and admiration, not to mention that of his colleagues. Although troubled by failing health toward the end of his life, Gahr retained his passion for music and no-bullshit attitude until the end and leaves a unique photographic legacy. 🐸

## FOLLOW THAT DREAM

*Born to Run* cover photographer Eric Meola on David Gahr

I never met David Gahr. But on a crisp fall day in 1973, I walked out of my apartment in New York and immediately heard a voice wafting out of a convertible parked at the curb, imploring me and anyone within earshot to "...shake away the street life, shake away the city life." A few days later I stood in a record store staring at the photograph on the back of the *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle*, entranced by the image of what was to become the E Street Band. I played the record, over and over. And as I looked at that photograph, a world beyond the city came alive—a place across the river far from the city's mad dog promenade.

Thirty-five years later, I found myself speaking with David Gahr on the phone—just a few short months before his death. I wanted to buy a print of that photograph because it had changed my life. But I had called too late; at the other end of the line, I heard David's rambunctious voice asking me why I wanted the photograph and asking me to call back when he wasn't so busy.

I hung up the phone and walked downstairs and looked at the photograph again—that image stopped in time which showed a bunch of guys who seemed not to have a care in the world, that image which transfixed me and was so powerful in its innocent simplicity that one day I rented a car and drove down to Red Bank and Deal and Freehold and, well... that paradise by the sea.

David's photographs did that—they had as much power as the lyrics on many of the albums his photographs graced. It is quite possible that David did not photograph someone important or not so important as he methodically and brilliantly created images of America's musicians for more than 50 years. But I wouldn't know who that would be. Certainly not Miles Davis, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, John Lennon, Mississippi John Hurt, the New Lost City Ramblers, or Bruce Springsteen.

When I first brought my portfolio up to the office of Columbia's legendary art director John Berg, I was acutely aware of one thing: The man sitting in front of me knew David Gahr and had held his prints in his hands.

I am not sure why, but for some reason I am always trying to define which medium is more powerful—photography or writing. On most days, writing wins, which is strange coming from a photographer. But there are days, like today, when I know the reason I fell in love with the craft of making images. David left us yesterday, but some kid will look at the way he captured the soul of those fortunate enough to be his subjects, and dream of being a photographer. Just as I did. 🐸

—Eric Meola, May 27, 2008



## the backstreets jukebox

### 1. Rosanne Cash

*The List*  
Manhattan (CD)

### 2. The Beatles

*The Beatles Mono Box Set*  
EMI (13 CDs)

### 3. Frightened Rabbit

*Midnight Organ Fight*  
Fat Cat (CD)

### 4. The Hold Steady

*Stay Positive*  
Vagrant (CD)

### 5. Cheap Trick

*The Latest*  
Cheap Trick (CD)

### 6. Elbow

*The Seldom Seen Kid*  
Geffen (CD)

### 7. Frightened Rabbit

*The Winter of Mixed Drinks*  
Fat Cat (CD)

### 8. Various Artists

*Good God! Born Again Funk*  
The Numero Group (CD)

### 9. Jason Falkner

*I'm OK, You're OK*  
Cobraside (CD)

### 10. Freedy Johnston

*Rain on the City*  
Bar None (CD)

**10** records  
that helped make  
this issue possible



# UNDERGROUND

By Fred Mills



## A Night for the Vietnam Veterans (Godfather 3CD)

VENUE: Sports Arena  
CITY: Los Angeles, CA  
DATE: Aug. 20, 1981  
SOUND QUALITY: 8  
PERFORMANCE: 10  
PACKAGING: 10

"August 20, 1981 is surely one of [Springsteen's] most important nights... one of the most intense shows [of his] career," reads this set's liner notes. Boy howdy to that. During this 29-song Vietnam Veterans Benefit concert one hears so much raw emotion and pedal-to-the-floor playing that you readily imagine the E Street Band all collapsing en masse after the last encore. During Bruce's introduction he likens America's treatment of our veterans to walking down a dark street and ignoring the sight of someone getting assaulted. Addressing the 18- and 19-year old boys in the audience, he also cautions, presciently, "You guys... It happened once, and it can happen again." The group subsequently launches into "Who'll Stop the Rain," an impassioned anthem indelibly associated with Vietnam.

As the concert progresses, they touch upon relevant musical themes of dashed dreams and glimpses of hope: "Trapped," "This Land is Your Land," "Prove It All Night," "Badlands," "The River," and the Byrds' "Ballad of Easy Rider," another tune that had come to be linked with the veterans, and one the E Streeters never performed again.

The original *A Night for the Vietnam Veteran* appeared in '95

courtesy the short-lived Winged Wheel label, but it sounded somewhat murky/boomy in places—we rated the sound a "6." Then in 2001, a newly unearthed tape yielded a significant upgrade (on gold disc, no less) from Scorpio/Hiwatt, boasting a richer bottom end, a crisper high end, and cleaner vocals.

It's likely that Godfather's version, which inexplicably adds an "s" to "Veteran" in the title, is just a remaster of the Scorpio edition. Godfather does add good-sounding and appropriate bonus tracks—"Proud Mary," "Deportee," "Stolen Car," "Follow That Dream," "Jackson Cage," "I Fought the Law," "Quarter to Three"—hailing from the August 21, 23 and 28 Sports Arena shows.

Winged Wheel specialized in interesting but impractical 7" x 7" boxes, housing a large booklet and discs in paper sleeves. Godfather opts for a more manageable (and damn handsome) tri-fold wallet pack featuring a six-page booklet plus a scaled-down reproduction of the poster insert that came with Scorpio's version. If you don't already own the Scorpio set, grab this on sight.



## Cupid

(Anubis 2CD-R)  
VENUE: Music Hall  
CITY: Boston, MA  
DATE: Oct. 29, 1974  
SOUND QUALITY: 8.5  
PERFORMANCE: 9  
PACKAGING: 8

For its latest numbered/limited-to-99-copies, vintage concert remaster, Anubis revisits Doberman's CDR *Flesh and Fantasy* (Doberman fell afoul of the British authorities a few years ago and went out of business). As that title was very good sonically—remarkably hiss-free, with only some venue boominess and crowd noise in the proximity of the taper—Anubis didn't need to do too much cleanup work for

this new edition, essentially just making the bottom end punchier and giving the vocals more presence. A four-panel booklet with color "action" photos plus a two-panel B&W tray insert rounds out the package.

*Cupid* showcases a riveting performance, from the opening cut, "Incident on 57th Street": it boasts an uncommonly yearning vocal that's abetted not only by Suki Lahav's gently swaying/weeping violin filigrees but her sweet backing vocals as well. Listen to how she coos, ethereally, the line "romantic young boys." Also in the setlist is a relative rarity, a cover of Sam Cooke's "Cupid"; a Lahav-powered "Jungleland"; "She's the One," with significantly different (early) lyrics; and a pumping "A Love So Fine." If you're looking for an essential slice of pre-BTR Bruce, this note's for you, pal.



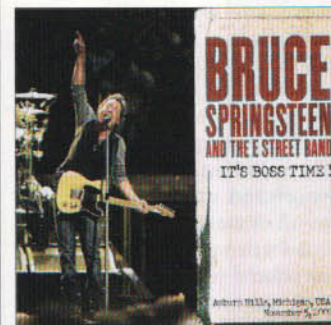
## Philadelphia Magic Night (Crystal Cat 2CD)

VENUE: Wachovia Center  
CITY: Philadelphia, PA  
DATE: Oct. 6, 2007  
SOUND QUALITY: 9  
PERFORMANCE: 9  
PACKAGING: 9

For its first Magic tour release, Crystal Cat tapped the third night; as you may have already read at Backstreets.com, all the opening-night kinks had been worked out by this second Philly show, as Bruce "demonstrated that what really makes for a powerful show is spontaneity, energy, and a venture or two off the map." To that end, direct your attention to: "Night" opening the show, followed in quick succession by "Radio Nowhere," "Prove It All Night," and "Gypsy Biker"; also a "The Ties That Bind"/"She's the One"/"Livin' in the Future" trifecta during the first half of the set; and "Cadillac Ranch," an uproarious audible taking the place of "Waitin' on a Sunny Day."

Crystal Cat has the standard smart (if by now overly familiar) packaging, a 12-page booklet loaded with color photos, plus a bonus insert featuring setlist and contemporary tour dates. The recording's sound quality is blessed by an unusually wide-screen stereo presence (and a raucous Philly crowd).

**Bonus Tracks:** "No Surrender," "Candy's Room," "Darkness," "Brilliant Disguise" (10/9/07, E. Rutherford, NJ).



## It's Boss Time! (Godfather 2CD)

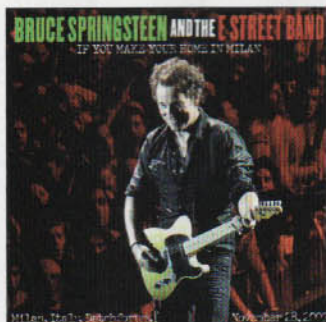
VENUE: Palace  
CITY: Auburn Hills, MI  
DATE: Nov. 5, 2007  
SOUND QUALITY: 7  
PERFORMANCE: 8  
PACKAGING: 9

A lively show featuring an intriguing setlist: a tour debut from *Magic* ("I'll Work for Your Love," bookended nicely by a powerhouse "Promised Land" and a sublime "Tunnel of Love"), and two vintage-track tour debuts, "Jackson Cage" and "Ramrod." Unfortunately, Godfather tapped a tape that's nothing but average. Though the vocals are clear, the overall sonics are thin and lack presence. The bottom end is nearly absent, and there's also some recurring distortion during high-end peaks.

Otherwise, it's a quality Godfather production featuring the now-standard tri-fold wallet sleeve, catchy graphic design, and liner notes from in-house commentator Joe Roberts. Check the bonus material, too: included are the two tracks that the band did in Ottawa with two members of the Arcade Fire, notably a version of A.F.'s own "Keep the Car Running."

**Bonus Tracks:** "Saint in the City," "Be True" (11/4/07, Cleveland); "Backstreets," "State Trooper," "Keep the Car Running" (10/14/07, Ottawa).





**If You Make Your Home in Milan**  
(*Godfather 2CD*)



**Milano Magic Night**  
(*Crystal Cat 2CD*)  
VENUE: Datchforum  
CITY: Milan, Italy  
DATE: Nov. 28, 2007  
SOUND QUALITY: 8/9  
PERFORMANCE: 9  
PACKAGING: 9/9

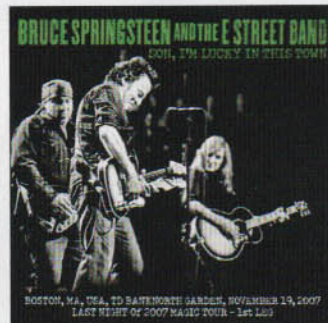
Dueling releases from Godfather and Crystal Cat, and A-B comparisons find the transparent tabby wining hands down over the digital don, sound-wise. The labels tapped different tapes, and CC's is hotter with better overall presence and stereo imaging plus a richer, more prominent bottom end (something Godfather has been falling down on the job with lately), crisper high end, and sharper definition of the individual instruments.

The show itself is nearly flawless. It was the third on the European Magic tour (and new keyboardist Charlie Giordano's third show), and for some reason the E Streeters always kick into high gear at this point in a tour leg. Per tradition, the Italian fans sing along enthusiastically at every opportunity—on "Incident," they sound almost like a gospel chorus! The show also has some notable audibles, including "The E Street Shuffle" subbing in for what would have been "Working on the Highway"/"Darlington County."

Both sets are packaged handsomely: CC's 16-page booklet plus

setlist/itinerary insert, Godfather offering an artful, Italian-colors themed tri-fold wallet.

**Bonus Tracks:** Godfather: "Night," "Code of Silence" (w/ Joe Grushecky), "Backstreets," "Youngstown" (11/14/07, Pittsburgh); Crystal Cat: "Sandy" (11/15/07, Albany), "This Hard Land" (11/19/07, Boston).



**Son, I'm Lucky in This Town**  
(*Godfather 2CD*)  
VENUE: Banknorth Garden  
CITY: Boston, MA  
DATE: Nov. 19, 2007  
SOUND QUALITY: 8  
PERFORMANCE: 10  
PACKAGING: 9

Though Danny Federici later made a surprise guest appearance, in March 2008 in Indianapolis, this Boston show would be his final full show with the E Street Band. No one knew that at the time, but the knowledge that Danny's health was preventing him from heading to Europe with them clearly energized the band on multiple levels.

Now, checking out the last Magic show of the first leg, it's hard not to get choked up listening to a set weighted heavily towards the early, classic period. There's "Night," "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)," "The E Street Shuffle," "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," "Kitty's Back," and "Born to Run"—raise your hand if you were lucky enough to be around during the E Streeters-as-a-gang days, an era when Bruce and the guys were hurtling towards a still-uncertain future. Looking back, it seems like a fairy tale, doesn't it? And Danny, who was there from the beginning, got to live that fairy tale.

Sonically, it's not Godfather's greatest production, primarily due to a persistent echoey quality. But given the emotion pouring off the stage, it's good enough. As Joe Roberts' artful liner notes say, "The perfect town and the

perfect show to say goodbye to a blood brother."

**Bonus Tracks:** "Jackson Cage," "Jungleland" (11/18/07, Boston).



**Stockholm Magic Night**  
(*Crystal Cat 2CD*)  
VENUE: Globe Arena  
CITY: Stockholm, Sweden  
DATE: Dec. 10, 2007  
SOUND QUALITY: 9  
PERFORMANCE: 10  
PACKAGING: 9

In a word—wow. While sitting at home can't compare to being there, the electricity crackling in these digital grooves is palpable. Go to Backstreets.com to read the full report on the Stockholm show, although it's so loaded with peaks that no write-up can do full justice.

Highlights include the most full-on, stomping version of "Reason to Believe" in memory; the patented "Candy's Room"/"She's the One" twin-punch, with Clarence blowing so hard he very nearly achieves lift-off; "The River" restored to its original album arrangement. And standard or not, the powerful set-closing run of "The Rising"/"Last to Die"/"Long Walk Home"/"Badlands" is indeed a showstopper, offering up the very essence of the hope/outrage/sorrow/defiance aesthetic we've come to call "Springsteenian."

In the mix: Clarence's kid Christopher Clemons, guesting on acoustic guitar during "Dancing in the Dark." Somewhere along the way Santa visits Stockholm, too.

You get the usual Crystal Cat high-quality package with picture disc CDs, setlist insert and thick booklet—the cover photo of Springsteen playing guitar and grinning for the cellphone cameras is priceless—helping make this the best underground artifact thus far from the Euro '07 leg of the Magic tour.

**Bonus Track:** "Two Hearts" (10/26/07, Oakland).



**London Magic Night**  
(*Crystal Cat 2CD*)  
VENUE: O2 Arena  
CITY: London, England  
DATE: Dec. 19, 2007  
SOUND QUALITY: 8  
PERFORMANCE: 9  
PACKAGING: 9

Fittingly enough, Crystal Cat closes out its 2007 musical survey with the final night of the 2007 Magic tour, which brought Bruce & Co. to the new O2 arena less than a week before Christmas. Bruce & Co. bring plenty of cheer to the stage—and no shortage of festive holiday headgear, judging by that cover.

One high point comes early in the setlist with the "Lonesome Day"/"Gypsy Biker"/"Magic" trilogy holding the audience rapt with attention; another is "The Promised Land," done this time with the "People Get Ready" coda. Then there are the night's audibles, with "Working on the Highway" and a rare (for the tour) "Racing in the Street" replacing "The River." And don't miss the incandescent "Because the Night," which finds Nils transforming the mid-song guitar break into an extended excursion that's pure sonic ballet along the lines of the *Darkness* era's "Prove It All Night" intro. At the end, everyone dons Santa hats as Bruce asks the crowd, "Do you believe in Santy Claus?" Yes, Boss, they surely do.

Even if this isn't Crystal Cat's best-sounding title from the tour—there's a nagging boominess and, in places, muffling, either the product of venue acoustics or the taper's position (probably both)—it's one of the most engaging.

**Bonus Track:** "Youngstown" (11/14/07, Pittsburgh).

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**E**arlier in this issue [pages 32 and 41], we presented lists of the Top Ten recordings from both the Magic and Working on a Dream tours—not the best shows, per se, but the recordings that best offered that magical mix of sound quality and performance. Here, we'll take a look at the ones that didn't quite make the cut: the best of the rest.

The 2007-2008 Magic tour was an emotional one all the way around, from the anger in the songs on the new album to the passing of Danny Federici, and so many of those emotional shows have to be included in a wrap-up such as this one. We already mentioned the November 19, 2007, show from Boston, which was Danny's last show as a full-time member of the band, and now we have to include the March 20, 2008, show from Indianapolis, when Danny made one last appearance with the E Street Band, playing on nine songs, including the final five of the night. While Indy may not have been as emotional as that last night in Boston, this show still deserves mention, especially as Bruce went "old school" on "Spirit in the Night" and "Sandy" with Danny on stage. Negative One's recording is the one to get.

The first show after Danny's passing in Tampa, FL, on April 22, 2008, was mentioned previously as well, but the show from the following night in Orlando can be considered a companion piece. Bruce opened the show on April 23 with the rockin' arrangement of "Blood Brothers," and the set list again served as an "E Street Retrospective." Roger McGuinn joined the band on-stage for two Byrds classics in the encores. Even from the recording you can tell how excited Bruce and the Band were to be playing with one of their heroes. Bakerstuff's recording was already pretty sweet before Crystal Cat used it as the source for their *Phantom Night for Danny in Orlando* release.

December 19, 2007, was the end of the 2007 jaunt of the Magic tour, and the show from London featured a relatively standard set list. But any show with "Racing in the Street" goes up a notch, especially when it's available in excellent quality as a remaster from Ev2.

There was no shortage of excellent recordings from the 2008 European leg, although most of them were courtesy of Crystal Cat. However, Queensgrooves' recording of the July 11 show from Helsinki, Finland, is one of, if not the best non-feline recording from that leg. Bruce put together a setlist worthy of the recording, with "Point Blank," "Sandy," "I'll Work For Your Love," and a full band "Born in the U.S.A." in the main set-ending arc between "Long Walk Home" and "Badlands."

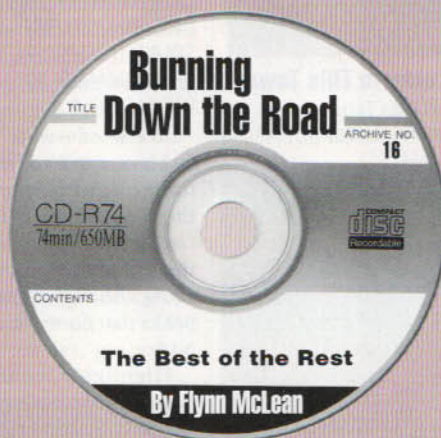
Another notable non-Crystal Cat recording from the 2008 European tour was a team effort, as Moerie's already-excellent recording of the June 27 show in Paris, France, was polished up a bit by Ascot47 to take it to the next level. The show featured a cool set list, too, with "Rendezvous," "Janey Don't You Lose Heart," and a very rare solo piano performance of "For You."

Going back to the spring leg, March 24, 2008 in Columbus, OH, was another strong night that was forgotten after the emotional shows a month later. This one is worth it just for the only tour performance of "You'll Be Comin' Down," but add

in "Something in the Night," "Sherry Darling," and "Incident on 57th Street," and you end up with a very strong show, especially after Neo remastered the Travitz Schoeps-based recording. It's one of the best of the tour.

**E**very tour seems to bring a new technology to the world of "fan-based recordings": the Reunion tour ushered in the era of the recordable CD as the new standard; the Rising tour coincided with the development of the binary newsgroup ABMS; the Devils & Dust and Seeger Sessions tours saw the use of BitTorrent as the standard of distribution through the internet; and the 2007 portion of the Magic tour featured tapers moving to recorders that use Flash-based memory instead of moving parts.

The 2008 legs of the Magic tour brought us 24 bit, 96 khz audio, which features four times as much digital information as the audio on a regular



audio CD. While some tapers have been recording in that format with the new Flash-based recorders, the resulting recording always had to be downsampled to be distributed as a regular audio CD, an obvious decrease in quality from the higher sampling rate.

A format known as DVD-Audio would have been a candidate for allowing the original 24/96 recording to be played back in an uncompressed environment. Unfortunately, DVD-Audio can only be played on DVD players specifically designed to play that format, which is not an ideal solution.

However, there are a couple of DVD authoring programs—most notably Audio DVD Creator—that create a gapless audio disc which will play the uncompressed 24/96 audio on any standard DVD player. The 24/96 audio capability is inherent in the standard DVD format, but is never used. This "psuedo-format," called Audio DVD, can be burned as a normal DVD and played like a normal DVD on any DVD player, preserving the high sampling rate. When that audio is played back in the same format as it was recorded, preferably through good speakers, it is probably the closest feeling to actually being at the concert. Listen to them on small computer speakers or through ear buds and—like the Schoeps recordings—you'll think these recordings are boomy and a bit bassy. But once the music is allowed to fill a room, they become the fullest recordings of the tour.

The first shows to be recorded and made available in 24/96 audio were the three Northwest shows from the end of March 2008—Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver—recorded, authored, and uploaded to the Jungleland BitTorrent site by JEMS. Fortunately for us, the best of these three is easily the March 31 show from Vancouver, a solid show all around that includes the first-ever E Street Band performance of "None But the Brave." This one sounds sharper than the other two, with considerably less distracting audience noise near the taper.

The "Audio" is what is stressed in an Audio DVD. The menus for these discs are not as interactive or graphically impressive as other, "regular" DVDs. There is not a menu to select a particular song, so you need to click "next chapter" on the DVD player to get to the song you want. Bruce's handwritten set list is used as the background, but, of course, the handwritten set list is not always what was played, so it can be misleading when Bruce decides to go in another direction during the show. Again, with the actual audio content the main attraction, these are just small issues in the big picture (so to speak).

**W**hen Bruce and the E Street Band hit the road again after the release of the *Working on a Dream* album, the "theme" of the tour was *anything goes*: they had fun playing a lot of crowd-pleasers and fun covers from their bar band days, and then the full-album concept later in the tour added a new wrinkle to the shows. Again, we've already discussed the Top Ten recordings from the tour, but these are additional shows worth mentioning.

Two hugely notable absences on our Top Ten recordings list from 2009 are shows featuring the full album performances of *Darkness on the Edge of Town* and *Born in the U.S.A.*, so let's address those first. The October 14 show from the Spectrum in Philadelphia, one of only two '09 shows to feature *Darkness*, was captured by four different tapers, with the BS Fanatic remaster of The Flying Gonz original recording being the best of the bunch. And the set list outside of the album featured some unique songs, including the opening "Thundercrack" and the only tour performance of "What Love Can Do."

Selecting a *Born in the U.S.A.* show is a little tougher. There's something to be said for choosing the October 9 show from Giants Stadium, as that mega-million selling album was the one that got him into that enormous venue 24 years earlier, and there is an excellent recording, courtesy of SCB, to warrant inclusion. The rest of the show was strong as well, with rare performances of "Tougher Than the Rest" and "Jersey Girl," plus a cover of the Rolling Stones' "The Last Time." But, like the 1985 concerts, this one was more of an event than a show, as it was the last night at (old) Giants Stadium.

But when they took *Born in the U.S.A.* inside at the Spectrum in Philly on October 20, the show will be remembered not just for the album performance, but for all the other nuggets played, such as "Kitty's Back," "Loose Ends," and "Spirit in the Night" with guest Vini "Mad Dog" Lopez. Top that off with the opening "The Price You Pay," an event



# CLASSIFIEDS

## PERSONALS

**HAPPY SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY, BRUCE! YOU HAVE** definitely proved it all night! Richard A Benedict, Glen Burnie, MD, USA. [Baltimorejack71@aol.com](mailto:Baltimorejack71@aol.com)

**I'M JESSE AND I'M 17 FROM NJ. E-MAIL ME AT** [jhein1992@gmail.com](mailto:jhein1992@gmail.com) you if wanna discuss all things Bruce!

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## WANTED

**NASSAU COLISEUM, 5-4-09. THAT WAS MY 11-** year-old daughter Bruce hugged on stage during the intro to "Raise Your Hand." Looking for high quality photographs or video of this dream come true! E-mail [swalast@aol.com](mailto:swalast@aol.com). Countin' on a miracle...

**WANTED: VHS OR DVD OF BRUCE'S 2008 60 MINUTES** appearance and his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; audio of Steve's interview on NPR's Fresh Air. Please email [RAMSGAL85@yahoo.com](mailto:RAMSGAL85@yahoo.com).

## FOR SALE

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"Hey, whozzat taping out there?"  
Charlottesville, VA, May 5, 2009  
A runner-up for best  
WOAD tour recording.

BOB ZIMMERMAN PHOTO



in and of itself as it was played for the first time in over 28 years, and the main set-closing "Higher and Higher," which became a staple for the final month of the tour. JerseyBoy's excellent recording is the best one from this night.

Going back to the spring leg, while the two Philly shows at the end of April received a lot of attention, the performance a week later in Charlottesville, VA, on May 5 was just as strong, and the recording of that show by Lp20 was just as good as any of those from the Philly crew: very up-front, crisp, clear, with an appropriate level of nearby audience noise. Maybe the set wasn't as far-reaching as the previous week, but "Roulette" elevates the show every time Bruce pulls it out, as he did in Charlottesville during the "recession pack." The audience request section gave us "You Really Got Me," which was more Van Halen than Kinks, allowing the band's three-guitar attack to do some shredding, and a very fun "Detroit Medley" ended the show on a wild note.

The 2009 European leg is pretty much dominated by Crystal Cat's releases. Their release of the June 28 show from Hyde Park easily reach-

es highest echelon for audience recordings—not just from this tour, but ever. Unfortunately, the set list wasn't as "challenging" for the Hard Rock Calling festival-goers as it would have been at a regular show, but a show-opening "London Calling," a cover of the Rascals' "Good Lovin'" as the sign collection soundtrack, and both "Racing in the Street" and "Jungleland" are in the plus column.

Crystal Cat's June 5 show from Stockholm was included in the Top Ten list, but both of the other Cat releases from that stand—June 4 and 7—are also excellent. The June 7 concert includes the first E Street Band performance of "Fade Away" since 1981, and it doesn't disappoint. Another trifecta for Crystal Cat came with the three releases from the Italian leg. July 21 in Torino was part of the Top Ten list, but all three recordings rank high. July 23 in Udine included one of the better request sections of the tour with "Be True," "Streets of Fire," and "My Love Will Not Let You Down." And July 19 from Rome featured the only tour performance of "My City of Ruins," plus "Pink Cadillac" and "You Can't Sit Down." *Fantastico Bruce!* 🐾



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## LETTERS continued from page 5

the "new" fans couldn't see him. Please, if it's possible for you, tell him that Argentines are hoping to see him and the E Street Band once in our life. You're very lucky to enjoy Bruce's music every year. For us, it would be a gift from the gods if he would arrive in this humble country.

Alberto Pellegrino  
via e-mail

### Dear Editor:

What can Springsteen's diehard fans do to get him to add South Africa to his agenda? He's never been here before, so we're all desperate! We've had U2, the Stones, Michael Jackson, and other international acts, but never the "main man."

Lance Rooney  
via e-mail

### Dear Editor:

Am I allowed to be disappointed? Springsteen had mentioned in an interview he did for an Indian newspaper—during the Devils & Dust tour—that he might schedule a stop in India for his next album with the E Street band. Any way to remind him?

Ananda Ray  
via e-mail

### Dear Editor:

I'm 38, from Istanbul, Turkey, and I've been a *Backstreets* reader for a while. I really can't stand waiting to see The Boss here in Turkey any longer. You can't imagine how much I love him—and here in Istanbul many people love him like me—but we want to see him here *live*.

I mean please and please and please, if you get a chance to see Bruce, please tell him about me and my country. Please tell him that many amazing people here are already ready to come see him live. Please tell him if he comes to Turkey he will have a fantastic time here.

I really don't have any more words to express my feelings, but please understand me, I'm afraid in this cruel world I will never have the chance to see him perform—maybe in some foreign country, but in my country it would be so different, so amazing.

Thank you from deep in my heart for reading this mail. God bless you all.

Filiz Dere  
Istanbul, Turkey

## NOBODY KNOWS

### Dear Editor:

Could you please tell me the name of a Springsteen song where he mentions a woman named "Lolita" in it?

He also sings in the song of going to California and getting away from her parents possibly?

Thanks.

Vic  
via e-mail



# LUIS MORENO



## THIS IS ME

The debut album coming this fall, 2010.

[luismorenomusic.com](http://luismorenomusic.com)

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